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December 2005

A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

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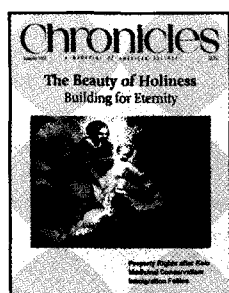
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Chronicles

A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

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Fixing our gaze.

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POLEMICS & EXCHANGES

On the Spirit of Sam Francis On Inquisitorial Intolerance

For the first time, for nearly an hour, the sting of the death of Dr. Samuel Francis subsided. The ointment was in your October number—the “Letter From Charleston: The Flamingo Kid” (*Correspondence*) by Mr. Jack Trotter. That essay alone is worth more than the cost of the entire issue.

I realize that it should not take nearly an hour to read two-and-a-half pages. Even old clover kickers, such as myself, are capable of better. The plain truth is that, even on the third reading, I was laughing and wiping my eyes as frequently as I had during the initial reading.

More writing by Mr. Trotter, please. He adroitly covers the political career of the quick-witted and clever Rep. John Graham Altman III in a few fast-paced pages with a sampling of H.L. Mencken to expose the buffoonery of no end.

Among Mr. Trotter's gems—“a man who battered his wife was too busy hiding from the kinfolk to worry about the law.” Hear! Hear! Besides, it kept the prison population in economic check, as there was no need—as in the case of my local and rural county—of over 1,500 protection orders and a new county jail costing over \$30 million.

As I read, I wondered if Mr. Trotter would bring in Representative Altman's position on Junior King and the Battle Flag debacle. It was all there, plus secession!

When all was read and done, this bantive gamecock of the north was prepared to send some after-tax fiat paper currency to Charleston—specifically, to 77 Folly Road—to help keep “the politically correct and the sanctimonious” in check. Besides, those flamigos need their food and finery.

Thank you, Representative Altman and Mr. Trotter.

—Steve J. Medve
Canton, NY

Christopher Check, in his recount of a visit to Edinburgh (“An Instinctive Jacobite,” *The Best Revenge*, October), describes his glee at learning that the grave of John Knox is lost under a parking lot as well as his urge to urinate on the approximate site. The passage indicates that his glee and the urge are attributable to his Catholicism.

Are we to take this boorish, intolerant—in the inquisitorial sense—attitude to be prevalent among members of the Catholic Church *vis-à-vis* their fellow Christians? Or is it just a rather low-class joke that I am missing? If so, please let me know, and I might find something to do with that Polish fellow's grave in Rome.

—Eric Rachut
Moody, TX

Mr. Check Replies:

I apologize to Mr. Rachut for coarse humor, doubtless better suited to the squad bay than to a distinguished magazine.

My debt to the memory of John Knox is another matter. When the heretic learned of the cold-blooded murder of the queen of Scot's Catholic secretary, he described the act as “most just and worthy of all praise.” He heaped similar lauds on the murderers of Cardinal Beaton. He waged war on Tradition, on the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and on the Blessed Sacrament. He had his own version of the three-strikes rule: A priest caught celebrating Mass for the third time should be put to death. Knox aroused the mob that he called the “people of God” and the “brethren” to acts of murder, vandalism, sacrilege, and treason. He browbeat the young Mary, reducing her to tears, and publicly and frequently referred to her as “Jezebel.” If Calvin and Luther disagreed

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with Knox's teachings and tactics, what is there for me to tolerate?

It hardly matters that there is no marker on his grave. Scotland endures his legacy. Only in the past three decades have there been public Christmas trees in Edinburgh, and a once-magnificent medieval Church on Edinburgh's High Street stands violently stripped of all its sacred beauty and mystery.

I do, in all Christian friendship, invite Mr. Rachut to join us in Rome in January. I'll show him the late pope's grave, and I'll encourage him to exercise the same restraint that I did.

On Communing With Saints

I must take strong issue with Michael McMahon's "The Communion of Saints" (*Views*, September), which cast aspersions on the biographies of Saint Catherine of Siena, Saint Cecelia, and Saint Barbara. Such sentiments are best reserved to the Soviet-era *Krokidil*. Devotion to these saints has less to do with the unlikely nature of their biographies and more to do with their proved effectiveness. It is easier for the Masonic-orient-

ed to rid the world of belief in God than of belief in the intercession of these saints whose effectiveness is legendary.

The Franj on crusade had years of hardship that led them to gravitate toward the saints they found most effective; Saint Barbara, Saint Margaret of Antioch, and Saint Catherine of Alexandria were constant favorites in the medieval version of the scientific method of trial and error. Whole regions devoted to the Fourteen Holy Helpers in German-speaking and Polish-speaking Central Europe were untouched by the Black Death of the 1370's and 1380's.

May I suggest a litany to the Fourteen Holy Helpers after a Daily Rosary for 40 days before one determines which saints are "apocryphal"?

—Richard N. Nicoletti
Bordentown, NJ

Mr. McMahon Replies:

I find it difficult to engage with Mr. Nicoletti's arguments because they do not appear to spring from a reasonable understanding of mine, and they are confusingly expressed. His accusation that I "cast aspersions on

the biographies of Saint Catherine of Siena, Saint Cecelia, and Saint Barbara" is so obviously wide of the mark that I am left wondering what he can mean, particularly as, two sentences later, he himself casts an aspersion on these very "biographies" that is absolute, dismissing them in passing as "unlikely." My piece unambiguously celebrated not only the real lives of the saints but the poetic truths embodied in their legends—even those of the saints that we now know never existed.

Mr. Nicoletti's assertion that a saint with a reputation for intercessory effectiveness cannot be apocryphal is easier to understand, but he does not advance it convincingly, and he does his case no service by using the word *legendary* in its informal sense. In hagiography, *legendary* does not mean "famously self-evident"; it means "pertaining to legend"—and legends are not necessarily historically true. The saints he lists were indeed favored by the crusaders—but the Crusades ended in disarray and failure. This is no more evidence that any of those saints were apocryphal than that they were real. Some areas with a devotion to the Fourteen Holy Helpers escaped the Plague. What of those areas or individuals with similar devotions that did not?

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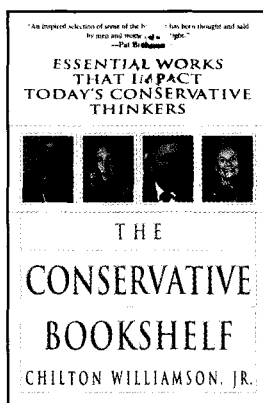
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Dick Cheney's Uncertain Future

Special Counsel Patrick Fitzgerald called a press conference on October 28 to announce a five-count indictment against I. Lewis Libby, chief of staff and principal national security advisor to Vice President Dick Cheney. Fitzgerald indicted Libby on one count of obstruction of justice, two counts of perjury, and two counts of false statements. The charges were made against Libby for his alleged cover-up of his role in blowing the cover of "Valerie Wilson," a covert CIA operative. The other main target of Fitzgerald's investigation, Bush political advisor Karl Rove, dodged the bullet of an indictment after he made a fourth (and final) trip to the grand jury and after Rove's attorney engaged in lengthy, last-minute discussions with Fitzgerald's office, according to sources close to the investigation. While Rove was not indicted, the special counsel made clear that his investigation was "not over" and that Rove was still a target. Shortly after his initial statement, Fitzgerald also announced that he intended to call Vice President Cheney at Libby's trial, signaling that the Vice President himself might be a target of Fitzgerald's investigation.

What happens next? It is difficult to speculate how far the investigation will go and who else may be indicted as Fitzgerald looks into the improper use of national-security information by administration officials. One immediate fallout of the indictment is that the alliance of mutual convenience between Karl Rove, the President's chief political advisor, and Vice President Dick Cheney, the "king" of foreign policy in the Bush Administration, may well be over. One commentator asked, after Rove managed a last-minute escape from "political execution," "Did Rove rat on Scooter?" The speculation is that "Rove fingered Libby to save his own skin," as Joshua Frank put it.

Cheney was a latecomer to the Bush presidential team. Karl Rove, on the other hand, had dreamed of a Bush presidency even before George W. Bush's first race for governor of Texas in 1994. More than any other individual, Karl Rove is responsible for George W. Bush's election as governor of Texas and president of the United States. People tend to forget that

Cheney was selected by the Bush team to identify and recommend a running mate in 2000 and that he, in effect, recommended himself.

During the selection process, there was a lot of speculation by Texas political insiders that Karl Rove was not pleased with the naming of Cheney as Bush's running mate. Those same sources believed that Rove would have preferred someone like John Danforth, a former senator from Missouri who was a Bush family friend from way back. Instead, Cheney's selection meant that a bureaucratic insider, who had been President Ford's chief of staff and President George H.W. Bush's secretary of defense, would now be vice president of the United States.

While Danforth likely would have assumed the secondary role that most vice presidents fill, the selection of Dick Cheney immediately changed the dynamics of the office. From day one, Vice President Cheney became the most powerful figure to hold that position in my lifetime—particularly in the critical arena of foreign policy.

For all practical purposes, Cheney and Rove divided power in an administration in which the President would be minimally engaged in setting the policy agenda. Vice President Cheney had the preeminent role in the foreign-policy decisionmaking process. The Vice President became the *de facto* president of foreign policy, with Lewis Libby as his right-hand man. The Vice President also exercised authority over certain domestic issues, such as energy policy. Meanwhile, Karl Rove ran the White House political operation and had a significant say over the President's domestic agenda.

A lot of people do not realize that, while Karl Rove and Vice President Cheney wield enormous power in their own spheres of influence within the Bush administration, they are not long-time political allies. Nor do they necessarily share the same worldview.

That division of authority within the Bush White House worked until the war in Iraq began to go badly and the investigation into the outing of Valerie Plame heated up. Both Cheney and Rove had supported the war, albeit for very differ-

ent reasons. But the Plame investigation was principally about the improper use of classified national-security information by administration officials. Those same officials may have had a motive to manipulate intelligence in order to justify the war in Iraq, a position they had promoted long before September 11, 2001. All of this was going on within Cheney's sphere of influence, not Rove's.

So, it would not be surprising if Rove is cooperating with Patrick Fitzgerald's office in an investigation that may ultimately bring down the Vice President.

Cheney's advice has not served the President well. A majority of Americans have turned against the war in Iraq. Col. Lawrence Wilkerson, a retired Marine Corps officer and foreign chief of staff to former secretary of state Colin Powell, recently charged that the "Cheney cabal hijacked foreign policy" in the Bush administration and has made a mess of things in the Middle East.

Gen. Brent Scowcroft, national-security advisor to George H.W. Bush, made a scathing attack on Cheney in a recent *New Yorker* article over what Scowcroft calls the administration's "radical intervention" in the Middle East, orchestrated by the Vice President. Neoconservative architects of the war such as Paul Wolfowitz and Douglas Feith have already jumped ship. Now, Libby is gone. Will the Vice President be next?

Karl Rove has an excellent political antenna. He has to know that the neocon-directed foreign policy in the Middle East has turned into a political liability for his boss. Will Karl seek to persuade the President that Dick Cheney's supremacy over the foreign-policy decisionmaking process should end?

The place to watch for a possible shift in direction for the Bush administration is at the National Security Council staff level. If Stephen Hadley were to leave (and an individual more independent of Cheney were to take his place as national-security advisor), this might indicate a shift in power away from Cheney. Meanwhile, the Vice President has to worry that the special counsel has him in his sights and that Karl Rove may not be helpful to him at this particular moment.

CHRISTOPHER WILSON was arrested in October in Polk County, Florida, on obscenity charges. Mr. Wilson's pornographic website contains pictures of the wives and girlfriends of his paying customers posing and engaging in sex acts, and he claims that about a third of his reported 160,000 customers are in the U.S. military. When some of those troops stationed in war zones in Afghanistan and Iraq complained that their credit-card numbers were not being properly processed, the patriotic pornographer struck a deal with them: In exchange for access to the site, they would provide him with ghastly war-scene photos.

Wilson's site has posted grisly photos of dead Iraqis, including pictures of severed body parts and internal organs, with U.S. troops mocking the dismembered bodies. The caption "What every Iraqi should look like" accompanied one photo of a disemboweled man. Another had U.S. personnel pointing to a badly burned Iraqi corpse. The caption read: "Cooked Iraqi." Other photos asked viewers to guess which body parts were being shown. (These are only a few examples of the site's contents—others were even more shocking.)

Wilson's lawyer, Larry Walters, has said that his client simply wanted to "entertain" the troops and that he is suspicious the case is "political." In fact, the grotesque photos prompted protests from U.S.-based Muslim groups. Polk County Sheriff Grady Judd stated that Wilson had been under scrutiny previously, but the "horrific" photos had "shocked the sensibilities of the community" and were therefore obscene, prompting Wilson's arrest.

Military spokesmen have said they are investigating the story. Lt. Col. John Robinson, a Pentagon public-affairs officer, has commented that downloading or viewing pornography on military computers is a violation of regulations and could result in nonjudicial charges against the guilty parties. In these cases, commanders can take steps such as garnishing wages, reducing rank, ordering extra duty, or even handing out jail time. Robinson added, however, that the gory battlefield scenes were a "much more serious" matter. (The Pentagon had previously taken steps to block military access to Wilson's site, following reports last year

of pornographic photos of female U.S. personnel turning up on the site.)

Some of the troops involved, as well as Wilson, apparently saw themselves as doing something laudable, even patriotic. One press review of the pictures (I could not bring myself to go to Wilson's site and view them) reproduced this caption from a photo of dead Iraqis killed at a U.S. checkpoint: "These are things that we have to do. Some of us don't like it but it must be done to protect ourselves and our way of life. These are here to show we don't take anything lightly." Wilson, himself an ex-police officer, seemed proud of the photos. According to the *Guardian*, each column of war photos is headed by a paragraph denouncing censorship. "America is advanced citizenship," it reads, "America isn't easy." Former assistant judge advocate general Michael Marchand, now retired, recently commented that, in the past, he would have thought stories of American troops taking pictures of mangled corpses—much less bartering them for pornography—a lie. And now? "I'm not sure I can guess anymore."

The Bush White House has been so sensitive about U.S. dead that it has blocked journalists from taking photographs of flag-draped coffins and has protested Al Jazeera broadcasting footage of dead and captured U.S. troops. But the administration showed its true colors when it allowed photos of the bodies of Saddam Hussein's sons to be distributed to news media. The White House, for all of its posturing, hardly seems to be in a position of moral authority in the matter of media exploitation of graphic war images.

The actions of U.S. military personnel at Abu Ghraib, the very under-reported war-porno scandal, and the latest reports of U.S. personnel taunting Afghan insurgents by desecrating the bodies of their dead comrades say something about both the Bush administration and ourselves. This is partly a story of a "Christian" administration that has no sense of decency and nothing but contempt for traditional rules of warfare. That some of the troops in the field reflect that contempt is no surprise. But it is also the story of an American military that reflects the society in which it is rooted.

There are undoubtedly U.S. troops out there who deserve to be called "he-

roes." Capt. Ian Fishback, for example, has shown great moral courage in blowing the whistle on the abuse of prisoners in Iraq and Afghanistan. Most soldiers carry out their duties honorably. But there is too much scandalous smoke for there to be no fire. The America that produced Alvin York and Audie Murphy is long gone. What we have instead is the fictional tale of Jessica Lynch, the Bush administration's manipulation of the tragic death of Pat Tillman, and the depraved antics of Lynndie England, Charles Graner, Chris Wilson, and friends.

—Wayne Allensworth

DENNIS RADER, the disgusting, twisted pervert who flattered himself with the moniker "BTK" (for "bind, torture, and kill"), is a living witness to the existence of the Devil. On August 18, 2005, he was sentenced to 175 consecutive years in prison for ten grisly murders—the harshest sentence that Judge Gregory Waller of the Wichita district court could issue under Kansas law. Before Judge Waller read his sentence, members of the victims' families struggled through statements of rage and bitter sorrow, after which Mr. Rader offered them a 20-minute retrospective on their loved ones, whom he had terrorized and brutalized before executing them and engaging in acts of sexual perversion before their corpses. With diabolical fondness and tenderness, he recalled how much he shared in common with each of his victims. "Joseph Otero was in the Air Force," he said. "I was in the Air Force. He was a husband. I was a husband. So our threads are close."

Mr. Rader showed little emotion when, in almost the same breath, he described victim Nancy Fox as a "wonderful young lady," then admitted that he "track[ed] her just like a predator." However, he choked back tears when he recalled his childhood fondness for puppies. "Joseph Otero, too—he was just like me at one time, a boy and a dog."

Mr. Rader carefully planned each of his unspeakable acts, calling them "projects." One of them, "Project Cookie," involved his 53-year-old neighbor Marine Hedge, whom he strangled on April 27, 1985, in her home. He then took her body to his church, Christ Lutheran Church (ELCA) of Wichita, where he

staged elaborate scenes of perversion for photographing. Rader later confessed to police that, in preparation for this event, he had stored such items as black plastic sheets at the church.

Rader's close association with his church proved to be his undoing. At the time of his arrest, he was serving as congregation president. When Wichita police received a floppy disk containing a message from the BTK Killer (Rader had taunted police and media for years with cryptic messages celebrating his crimes), they traced the disk to a computer at Christ Lutheran, on which Rader had prepared the minutes from the church-council meeting. Pastor Michael G. Clark and his parishioners were immediately plunged into turmoil on February 25, when the police showed up with a warrant to search the church and informed Clark of Rader's arrest.

The Reverend Clark's liberal denomination had ill prepared him to handle such an event. In a recent interview with the *Kansas City Star*, Clark recalled his thinking in the days following Rader's arrest, as he reflected on the Gospel narrative describing Jesus' Last Supper, the night in which He was betrayed. "Finally, [Jesus] comes to Judas and he says, 'The one who dips this bread in my dish is my betrayer.' We hear that. That's very clear. But what we don't hear is the next

line: 'And Satan entered into him.'"

"I had never heard that," he continued. "Or never understood it. Today I do understand it because of what I've been through with Dennis and the fact that I firmly believe I have looked evil in the eye."

Nonetheless, the Reverend Clark still sounded conflicted, as interviewer Bill Tammeus asked him specifically if he now believes that "there's a personified, living Satan as opposed to evil generally or unpersonified."

"More personified," he replied, admitting that his "experiences and training" had caused him to discount the existence of the Devil. Today's sophisticated liberal theology, which permeates Clark's denomination, sees Satan as a mere "object we need to project evil onto because the source of evil is within us." Despite the clear teachings of the Bible, Clark admits that he would have dismissed anyone who claimed to believe in the Devil as "just plain crazy"—that is, before Dennis Rader.

Clergy (and members) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America are not required to believe in the Devil. According to *elca.org*, "there are ELCA Lutherans who understand Satan . . . to be a very real being, author of evil, prompter of sin, destroyer of humankind. Other ELCA Lutherans view Satan metaphorically—as the personification of evil forces in this world that oppose

and obstruct God's will in every age, be they human or spiritual." It should come as no surprise, then, that these pastors are not required to believe that Christ was born of the Virgin Mary ("When we confess . . . the Apostles' Creed . . . we are not making a gynecological assertion") or that Jesus literally and bodily rose from the dead ("a supernatural reality which does not belong to this world and cannot be the object of historic investigation").

This theological agnosticism stems from the ELCA's liberal approach toward the Bible itself. Over the course of the 20th century, it became fashionable to view the thornier passages of Scripture—talking serpents, demonic possession—as reflections of "time-bound cultural understandings or practices." Armed with the wisdom of modern psychology, historicism, and (a)morality, the Christian is tasked with determining the truth of the Bible for himself. "[W]e sometimes conclude either that the writer's culture or personal experience (e.g., subordination of women or keeping slaves) seems to have prompted his missing what God was saying or doing, or that God now is saying or doing something new." Thus, the ELCA has, for years, ordained women (*pace* such culturally bound apostles as Saint Paul) and is now reexamining its stance toward blessing homosexual "marriage" and clergy.

Not two weeks after Mr. Rader's arrest, Christ Lutheran entertained "guest preacher Pastor Janice Kibler of the Synod Staff," who stated that, when it comes to manifestations of evil, "theologically, the simple answers are not satisfying." Yet, as the weeks wore on, it seems that the simple answers of historic Christianity made more sense to Pastor Clark, who confesses that, while "we are the ones who ultimately make the decisions," nonetheless, "Satan has the ability to use us . . . we psychologicalize [*sic*] evil in this world, and we explain it and justify it in psychological language. And the reason we do that is we can measure it, we can test it, we can diagnose it and then we can put it into a category."

Sometimes, those "plain crazy" teachings of Scripture intrude upon our categories. In this case, serial killer Dennis Rader taught his pastor that the Devil is real. Perhaps Pastor Clark can teach the ELCA.

—Aaron D. Wolf

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Deadline March 1, 2006

the country's democratic process. When the results were published at the end of October, however, it became obvious that the Wolesi Jirga (Lower House) will be dominated by warlords, veteran jihadists, and former Taliban officials.

The new legislature will include Abdul Rasul Sayyaf, the head of the Ittihad-e-Islami (Islamic Union Party), who was mentioned in the September 11 Commission Report as a mentor to Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the suspected mastermind behind the attacks in New York and Washington, D.C. It will also include Hazara warlord Mohammed Mohaqiq, notorious for hammering nails into the heads of captives; the Jamiat-i-Islami's Younis Qanooni, guilty of countless atrocities during the civil war in the 1990's; and many others tainted by violence and criminality.

The most tangible effect of the Afghan election in the United States and Europe will be the continued easy availability of heroin. The Taliban regime was brutally effective in curtailing the production of opium, but output has skyrocketed under its U.S.-sponsored successors. Afghanistan now provides more than three quarters of the world's supply, and drug exports account for over one half of the country's gross domestic product. Twenty-eight out of the country's 32 provinces now produce the drug crop, up from 18 provinces in 1999. Opium cultivation and trade are controlled by local warlords who are now poised to dominate the legislature. Having bought enough votes and applied enough local intimidation to get themselves elected, they will be able to obstruct crop-eradication efforts advocated by the international community.

A cynic might conclude that Afghanistan is back to normal: There is a weak central government in Kabul, there are autonomous warlords in the north and the west, and predominantly Pashtun guerrillas are active in the east and south. Their attacks have killed over 1,200 people in the six months preceding the election, the worst death toll since the fall of Kabul in 2001. Peter Tomsen, former U.S. special envoy to Afghanistan, warns that the Taliban have become increasingly sophisticated in their training and are mounting ever-larger and more complex attacks.

Afghanistan's new legislature illustrates the perils of "spreading democracy" in the Muslim world. If applied consistently, the process would prove detrimental to U.S. security. Instead of the degenerate roy-

al kleptocrats, Osama's followers would run Saudi Arabia, Iraq would be ruled by Shiite clerics, and Mubarak would be replaced by the Muslim Brotherhood. Mr. Bush's desire for the Muslim world to become increasingly "democratic" would benefit those who would never thank him for making their rise to power possible. The Muslim world's genuinely democratic transformation would require a reform of Muhammad's faith so colossal as to turn it into something altogether new and different. Short of that elusive goal, the question we should ask is not how shall we bring them democracy, but how shall we reduce interaction with them and make America safer.

In the aftermath of September 11, the U.S. action in Afghanistan was supportable in the name of hardheaded, Jacksonian realism. That mission has lost its geopolitical rationale and needs to be terminated. Karzai may not last long on his own, which may be regrettable, but it is of no consequence as long as the Taliban do not return to power. That can be prevented more effectively by putting pressure on Pakistan—there is ample potential leverage on General Musharraf—than by maintaining international peacekeepers in Kabul and American soldiers in the provinces.

—Srdja Trifkovic

OBITER DICTA: Mark your calendar now for The Rockford Institute's next International Convivium, "The Roots of Democracy," to be held in Athens and the Peloponnese in May 2006. Democracy is the political legacy of ancient Greece, but today spreading it around the globe is America's justification for invading foreign countries. Is that what the Greeks meant by "democracy"? Join us as we explore Athens, Argos, Corinth, Mycenae, Epidaurus, Nauplion, Sparta, Kalamata, Olympia, and Delphi. For more information, visit chroniclesmagazine.org or call Rockford Institute vice president **Christopher Check** at (815) 964-5811.

Our poet this month is **Jeff Minick** of Waynesville, NC, a teacher, columnist, theater critic, and former bookstore owner. These poems are the first he has had published.

Our cover art is **Pietro da Cortona's Madonna and Child Appearing to Saint Francis of Assisi**, held by Pinacoteca, Vatican Museums, Vatican State, which we reproduce by permission of Scala/Art Resource, New York.

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The Beauty of Holiness, the Holiness of Beauty

"O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness; let the whole earth stand in awe of him."
—Psalm 96:9

The psalmists never tired of praising the beauty and majesty of the Lord's house. Solomon was so eager to build a fitting temple that he traded a good part of Galilee to Hiram of Tyre in exchange for building materials, and the description of the Temple and its construction takes up several rather tedious chapters of I Kings. The Christian Church, so far from rejecting the Temple's earthly beauty, fulfilled it. John Saward, who, in a fine book on Christian art, anticipated the title of my essay, has suggested that the beauty of Israel was only fully revealed in Mary.

Anyone who visits modern Tel Aviv, after reading the Psalms, is bound to be puzzled. At its best, modern Tel Aviv resembles a down-market section of Miami Beach, and, at its worst . . . well, I would compare it with the industrial suburbs of Bratislava and Belgrade, but that would be unfair to cities that have endured bombing and communism and yet still preserved a great deal of beauty in their historic centers. In Tel Aviv, apart from the little bits of the Arab city, there is nothing but Newark.

How did it happen that the people of David built one of the ugliest cities in the world? The answer cannot lie in anything specific to the Jews themselves. The modern world is generally an ugly place, while ancient Jews, in their reverence for sacred beauty, were not at all unusual. Egyptians, Persians, and even Assyrians built big and built well, and their temples were typically the most impressive of their buildings. The remains of Greek pagan temples have never ceased to impress people who have only seen pictures in books or Hollywood reconstructions. The religious appetite for beauty and magnificence did not die out in the Roman period, as anyone who has seen the Pantheon knows, or in the Christian Age, either in the East (Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, Gracanica in Kosovo-Metohija) or West (the cathedrals of Pisa and Siena, Chartres, and Winchester, to name only a few).

During the Renaissance and Enlightenment, magnificent churches were constructed, and even if I sometimes deplore the taste and spiritual formation of the builders, I have to admire the splendor. Even in the spiritually bankrupt 19th century, people demanded something more than mere utility in church architecture. Although (as one can conclude from Dr. James Patrick's article elsewhere in this issue) the Catholic and Anglican rage for neo-Gothic churches represents a mentality almost as artificial as the many neo-classical churches (often of bizarre dimensions) built by American Baptists and Methodists, these poor souls wanted to adore their Creator in a building that no one could confuse with a factory or grain silo. Then what *in Hell* has happened?

Whenever modern architecture is condemned in round terms, someone inevitably responds by accepting the general premise, but with a few exceptions. After seeing more than a few of the exceptions, I shall stick to round terms. Modern churches are not simply shoddy or drab; they are worse than deliberately ugly; they are a deliberate affront to whatever sense of reverence the worshiper has. Let me take just one example, a much-frequented and well-supported Catholic church in Northern Illinois. Appropriately located across from two small shopping centers, the church complex is the usual concrete-and-brick abstract study in confusion. There is no perceptible front or back, no imposing façade, no coherent shape. But this overall ugliness, however striking, is only superficial. After entering the brick barn and gawking at the avant-garde 1950's "art" (perhaps this stuff has a retro charm today), a visitor with an aesthetic sense feels immediately ill at ease. Of course, one is ill at ease in the dizzying circus-tent churches in which the lack of a focal point creates a sense of vertigo, but, in this place, there is something worse than confusion. The shape of the interior is like an asymmetrical cheese wedge, and the off-center location of the altar seems to drag the viewer's attention to the right, as if by magnetic repulsion, away from the crucifix. On the rare occasions I have been inside, I have been reminded of Lewis's description (in *That Hideous Strength*) of the off-balance

room in which Mark Studdock is placed to begin his spiritual deformation.

I can imagine what sort of smirking academic architect would design such a monstrosity, but what I shall never understand is the mind of the pastor (and the rich and powerful laymen supporting him) who approved the design. I do not say that one cannot worship in such a place, though, on several occasions I attended, the problems created by the architect were compounded by the antics of a flamboyantly self-admiring Irish priest, flouncing about melodramatically in a wizard's robe decorated with what he may have thought were Celtic symbols. Nonetheless, one of the best sermons I have heard in decades was delivered there by a joyfully severe African priest I should someday like to meet. Obviously, Christians can worship in a barn or in a sewer, but, given the choice and resources, any normal person would prefer to worship in "the beauty of holiness."

That's just your opinion. Haven't you ever heard that beauty is in the eye of the beholder?

I'd rather find it in the eye of the storm: "There's beauty in the bellow of the blast / and grandeur in the growling of a gale." Terror is a part of grandeur. What was it Rilke said, "*Denn das Schöne is nichts als des Schrecklichen Anfang*" — the beautiful is none other than the beginning of the terrible. The fear implied by awe is a part of a certain kind of beauty, the beauty of the Pantokrator in the dome of an Orthodox church or Signorelli's great frescoes of the Last Judgment in Orvieto. "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom," but what sort of fear or awe is inspired by light woods, soft carpet, and the reassuring commercial ambience of the contemporary mall-church, whether Protestant or Catholic?

Tastes do differ. There are pretty rococo chapels whose appeal is more to sensuality than awe, and, while I might think the style inappropriate in a church, I do not deny its prettiness. But nobody has ever really believed that "beauty is in the eye of the beholder." The argument for aesthetic and moral relativism is always and only made by people with an offensive aesthetic or morality they wish

to palm off on people who “don’t know much about art” but think (that is, they are waiting to be told) that they know what they like. If beauty really were subjective, why pay someone to paint a picture or build a church or compose a piece of music?

The argument from relativism is very much like the concept of equality. The only people who argue for equality are seeking superiority over a currently dominant group. “Bottom rail on top now,” a popular slogan of Reconstruction years, explicitly concedes the scarcely hidden objective of all minority-rights movements. In exactly the same way, aesthetic relativists would use your money to replace your sense of beauty with their own and, if necessary, at the point of the gun that will be used to arrest you if you refuse to pay your taxes to the National Endowment for the Arts.

Tastes do, indeed, vary, from man to man (and more, from man to woman), place to place, and age to age, but there are absolute standards of beauty within which these variations occur. Symmetry and proportion have been acknowledged elements of the beautiful since ancient times. Much poetry and music, for example, depend on the regular repetition of contrasting elements known as rhythm; in sculpture, there is a harmony of proportions of body length to the lengths of trunk and legs and of height to girth. Great and beautiful art is never quite realistic; it maintains a tension between the natural and the divine (that is, the ideal).

In sculpture, one of the problems faced by the Greeks was how to reconcile an abstract canon of geometrical proportions with the reality of the human form, and one can trace the history of their brilliant failures from archaic *kouros* types, reminiscent of Egyptian imperfect statues, to the late archaic sculptures from the Aphaea temple on Aegina, to the Parthenon’s pediments and friezes, to the even more complex canons of Polyclitus and Lysippus. They are “failures” in the sense that the task is more impossible than squaring the circle—which is one good reason why aesthetic taste is always fluctuating, if hardly ever improving.

Architecture presents more and graver challenges. The geometric basis of the Parthenon or Hagia Sophia is obvious; less apparent are the subtle ways in which architects must cheat on reality in order to bring their ideal into relationship with the human scale and the human eye.

All real artists, whether they can articu-

late it or not, are aware of the disjunction between the natural and the ideal. The Renaissance’s pursuit of photographic realism, complete with *camera obscura* and the elaborate calculations of perspective pursued by, for example, Paolo Uccello, was as wrongheaded as most of what went on in the Renaissance. Indeed, scientific naturalism is really a reversion to Neolithic cave paintings that look a good deal more naturalistic than most great art.

The artist, as opposed to the photographer or the Neolithic hunter who projected his eidetic memory on the wall and filled it in, is forever finding the meaning that lies hidden within flesh and bone. In this sense, the Greek geometric painter who tried to reduce the human form to lines, triangles, and circles is closer to Polyclitus than the Renaissance artists and their successors (down to the Impressionists) who thought they could portray things either as they are or as they seem to be in this sublunar world.

As Plato knew, the search for form is part of the search for the divine, but where Plato went astray was in believing that artists only imitated natural things that are themselves imitations of the ideal and perfect forms. On this point, Plotinus corrected his master. Even physical beauty may draw us upward toward perfection. The true artist—whether Phidias or an icon painter—fixes his gaze on the forms themselves, and the true architect, when he builds a church or temple, is trying to find a plastic expression of man’s yearning and reverence for the divine. The elements he uses are in their origin simple and often natural: tree trunks that evolve into marble columns; domes that echo the dome of the heavens; basic geometric shapes like triangles, pyramids, columns, and cones that give us a hint of the Creator’s mind.

A vast Gothic cathedral sometimes seems like a towering mountain range, but the mountains of another, more perfect world. The spires, soaring to heaven, draw our minds upward to heavenly things. Small wonder that Gothic became the high-church vernacular in the 19th century, the beginning of the final phase of European unbelief. The same century also witnessed the rise and fall of aestheticism as an alternative to Christianity, as writers and artists, after walking away from the “beauty of holiness” pursued the “holiness of beauty.” The experiment was made, in the best faith they had, by the “Parnassian” poets in France (and their successors, the symbolists), the

aesthetes and decadents in England, and, most ambitiously of all, Richard Wagner in Germany.

I am struck by the number of these beauty worshipers, whose lives were mostly tragically immoral, who came eventually to stare their own failures in the face and pursue sanity. Baudelaire returned to the Church of his childhood; Lionel Johnson (in many respects the best of the English decadents) turned Catholic; and even the impossible Wagner composed *Parsifal*, the opera that was the last straw for his Christophobic admirer, Friedrich Nietzsche. The “professor” (as Cosima Wagner called him) hated the work because he admired and feared it:

It was as if someone were speaking to me again, after many years, about the problems that disturb me—naturally not supplying the answers I would give, but the Christian answer, which after all has been the answer of stronger souls than the last two centuries of our era have produced.

This, then, is the reason why Tel Aviv is so ugly, and why Moscow and Detroit are (for the most part) ugly. Poverty and greed, rampant capitalism and stagnant socialism have played a part, to be sure, but men have created beauty in order to make a profit, and Stalin himself is said to have had some taste in poetry and music. The brick factories and wrought-iron train stations of the 19th century now seem like works of beauty to be preserved when compared with the lightless, airless, godless boxes that loom over downtown Manhattan and Chicago, and even Stalin’s terrifying buildings in Moscow have a kind of Gothic charm, today.

We of the Modern Age have not accidentally stumbled into ugliness; we have embraced it the way a married man embraces an ugly prostitute. We hate beauty because we hate the Source of beauty, and, in deliberately building ugly churches, we are betraying our true allegiance, which is not to God or even to Mammon. But, *sursum corda*: There is nothing wrong with modern churches that a fleet of FEMA bulldozers cannot fix. c

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Curriculum Vitae
by Jeff Minick

Here I am, words on paper; I hold myself in my hands,
Reading down the page, following my life's accomplishments—
Writer of articles and reviews, teacher of Latin and history,
Dutiful husband, father of four, graduate of colleges and institutions.
These words fall through me like fine sand, reminding me of my mother
Cooking at a stove when I came to her waist, timing meats and pies
With a silver hourglass. Could our lives in some sense be a meal,
Some eucharist in which we are both eater and eaten, offered up to God
By our own hands? Are we priest, lamb, victim and victor, all in one?
I glance at my references—one holy woman, one priest, one old friend—
The one I love, the one I admire, the last who has never let me go.
Love, faith, hope: here are the virtues. Let praises be sung.
The expected happens. Judgment passes. I am not hired.
Still I stare into my resume, this mystery of me, expired.

Ora Pro Nobis
by Jeff Minick

The dead die when we living let them die;
We breathing clasp to hearts our breathless dead;
We pack them lettuce fresh on icy beds.
In silent rooms they speak our names. They cry
To us: "Remember me! Remember me!"
Ah, Cissy, I remember you. Your eyes
Which last saw light at seventeen still lie
In me like jeweled cuts of sun-cut sea.
I dream your eyes, their baffled quiet grace;
Others forget, but I do not forget;
You prick my prayers, poor altars of regret;
My mind's sharp eye calls back your sea-sun gaze.
Pray all, I pray, who read these lines of song,
For her whose eyes are gone when I am gone.

Foss's Flying Circus

In the early 1960's, I was introduced to a fellow motorcycle rider by the name of Steve Foss. Before I could say anything, he quickly offered, "No relation to Joe Foss." He had anticipated my question and that of nearly everyone he had met for years back. For most Americans back then, the name Foss immediately brought to mind one of the greatest heroes in American history, the Marine fighter pilot who terrified the Japanese at Guadalcanal and was awarded the Medal of Honor.

Forty years later, not only had Joe Foss's name been forgotten, but the Medal of Honor had become something that Americans failed to recognize. In January 2002, the 86-year-old Foss was passing through security at Phoenix's Sky Harbor Airport when screeners discovered three suspicious items on his person: a key holder made from a dummy bullet; a small nail file; and a five-pointed star with a ribbon attached. The medal star puzzled the screeners and they thought it dangerous. Seven or eight of them held it, inspected it, and were unable to identify it.

"I kept explaining that it was the highest medal you can receive from the military in this country," said Foss,

but nobody listened. . . . I was held up for 45 minutes, while they decided what to do about the medal. I almost missed my flight, as they went back and forth. . . . I wasn't upset for me. I was upset for the Medal of Honor, that they just didn't know what it even was. It represents all of the guys who lost their lives—the guys who never came back. You're supposed to know what the Medal of Honor is.

Foss had the Medal of Honor with him only because he was on his way to give a speech at West Point and thought the academy cadets might want to take a look at the military's most coveted decoration.

Of Norwegian and Scottish stock, Joe Foss was born in 1915 on a farm in South Dakota. School and chores consumed

most of every day for the growing boy, but there was occasionally time for hunting. At night he read by lamplight, electricity having not yet reached the Foss farm. When he was 12, his father took him to an airfield near Sioux Falls to see Charles Lindbergh, on tour with *Spirit of St. Louis*. Joe was hooked. Four years later, he and his father took their first plane ride, paying \$1.50 each for the privilege.

When Foss was still in high school, his father died in an accident, forcing Joe to run the farm. He had not forgotten his desire to fly, though, and saved enough money to pay for flying lessons. After several years of working the farm and attending college part-time, he was able to enter the University of South Dakota. He supported himself waiting tables at restaurants near campus. Somehow, he found time to play football and complete a civilian pilot-training program before graduating in 1940.

With degree in hand, he joined the Marine Corps as an aviation cadet. After seven months of training at Pensacola Naval Air Station, he was awarded his wings and commissioned a lieutenant. He served for the next nine months as a flight instructor. When the Japanese perpetrated their sneak attack on Pearl Harbor, Foss immediately volunteered for duty as a fighter pilot. "You're too ancient," he was told. "You're 27 years old." With his superior skills, though, he was soon flying the F4F Wildcat and off to the Southwest Pacific as the executive officer of VMF-121.

On October 9, 1942, Foss, now a captain, landed at Henderson Field—pockmarked with bomb craters and littered with wrecked aircraft—and became a member of what the Marines called the Cactus Air Force. A few days later, Foss found himself in aerial combat. Jumped by a Zero, Foss suddenly slowed his Wildcat, causing the Japanese fighter to speed by. With a single burst of his guns, Foss sent the Zero flaming downward. Three more Zeros were now on his tail and firing. His oil cooler was hit and shredded, and the Wildcat's engine seized. The talented and steely nerved Foss got the F4F safely on the ground in a dead-stick landing.



A little more than a week later, in a day of furious fighting, Foss knocked four Zeros out of the sky and, now with five kills, was an ace. From then on, when he went up, a Japanese plane came down. The group of eight fighters from VMF-121 that he led became known as Foss's Flying Circus. Collectively, they would shoot down more than 60 enemy planes. Five of Foss's group became aces on Guadalcanal, and two died there. Foss himself had many a close call. On November 7, he shot down three Zeros in a wild dogfight over The Slot, but his Wildcat was badly damaged. As he limped home, two Zeros forced him to ditch in the ocean. The plane sank nose-first and was 30 feet underwater before Foss struggled from the cockpit and kicked for the surface. He spent 12 hours swimming and floating—and fending off sharks—before a missionary with a few Melanesians in a dugout canoe discovered him.

Although suffering terribly from malaria, by January 1943, Foss had shot down 26 Japanese planes, tying Eddie Rickenbacker's American record from World War I. Joe Foss was now a household name back in the States. He was ordered home, decorated with the Medal of Honor by President Roosevelt, and featured on the cover of *Life* magazine.

After the war, Foss organized the South Dakota Air National Guard, served with the outfit in Korea, and rose to the rank of brigadier general. He then served two terms in South Dakota's legislature and one term as governor. He later became the first commissioner of the American Football League, host of television's *The American Sportsman*, and president of the NRA. Nonetheless, he and the Medal of Honor went unrecognized and were thought a threat by those sharp-eyed security personnel at the airport.

The Romantic Reaction

Transcending the Divide

by Joseph Pearce

In the Afterword to the third edition of *The Pilgrim's Regress*, C.S. Lewis argued that *Romanticism* had acquired so many different meanings that it had become meaningless. "I would not now use this word . . . to describe anything," he complained, "for I now believe it to be a word of such varying senses that it has become useless and should be banished from our vocabulary." Pace Lewis, if we banished words because they have multifarious meanings or because their meanings are abused or debased by maladroit malapropism, we should soon find it impossible to say anything at all! Take the word *love*. Few words are more abused, yet few words are more necessary to an understanding of ourselves. John Lennon and Jesus Christ do not have the same thing in mind when they speak of love. One puts a flower in his hair and goes on an hallucinogenic trip to San Francisco; the Other wears a crown of thorns and goes to His death on Golgotha.

Of course, C.S. Lewis understood this — so well that he wrote a whole book on the subject. In *The Four Loves*, he sought to define *love*. And what is true of a word such as *love* is equally true of one such as *Romanticism*. If we are to advance in understanding, we must abandon the notion of abolishing the word and commence, instead, with defining our terms. Lewis, in spite of his protestations, understood this also, proceeding from his plaintive call for the abolition of the word to the enumeration of various definitions of it, claiming that "we can distinguish at least seven kinds of things which are called 'romantic.'" From four loves to seven romanticisms, Lewis was not about to abandon meaning, or the *mens sana*, to men without minds or chests.

Since Lewis's seven separate definitions of Romanticism are a little unwieldy, it is necessary to hone our definition. According to the *Collins Dictionary of Philosophy*, *Romanticism* is "a style of thinking and looking at the world that dominated 19th century Europe." Arising in early medieval culture, it referred originally to tales in the Romance languages about courtly love and other sentimental topics, as distinct from works in classical Latin. From the beginning, therefore, *Romanticism* stood in contradistinction to *classicism*. The former referred to an outlook marked by refined and responsive *feelings* and, thus, could be said to be inward looking, subjective, "sensitive," and given to noble dreams; the latter is marked by empiricism, governed by science and precise measures, and could be said to be outward looking.

Society has oscillated between the two visions of reality represented by classicism and Romanticism. This is itself an aberration, a product of modernity. In the Middle Ages, there was

no such oscillation between these two extremes of perception. On the contrary, the medieval world was characterized by a theological and philosophical unity that transcended the division between Romanticism and classicism. The nexus of philosophy and theology in the Platonic-Augustinian and Aristotelian-Thomistic view of man represented the fusion of *fides et ratio*, the uniting of faith and reason. Take, for example, the use of the figurative or the allegorical in medieval literature, or the use of symbolism in medieval art. The function of the figurative in medieval art and literature was not intended primarily to arouse spontaneous feelings in the observer or reader but to encourage him to see the philosophical or theological significance beneath the symbolic configuration. In this sense, medieval art, informed by medieval philosophy and theology, is much more objective and outward looking than the most "realistic" examples of modern art. The former points to abstract ideas that are the fruits of a philosophical tradition existing independently of either the artist or the observer; the latter derives its "realism" solely from the feelings and emotions of those "experiencing" it. One demands that the artist or the observer reach beyond himself to the transcendent truth that is out there; the other recedes into the transient feelings of subjective experience. The surrender of the transcendental to the transient, the perennial to the ephemeral, is the mark of post-Christian — and, therefore, post-rational — society. It is the mark of the beast.

The medieval fusion of faith and reason was fragmented, theologically, by the Reformation and, philosophically, by the neoclassicism of the late Renaissance. Romanticism and classicism can be said to represent attempts to put the fragments of post-Christian humpty-dumptydom together again. They are attempts to make sense of the senselessness of fragmented faith and reason.

The superciliously self-named Enlightenment was the philosophical Phoenix-Frankenstein that arose from the ashes of this fragmented unity. It represented faithless "reason" or, more correctly, a blind faith in "reason" alone. In much the same way that the theological fragmentation of the Protestant Reformation had led to a rejection of scholastic *ratio*, enshrining *fides* alone, so the philosophical fragmentation of the Renaissance-Enlightenment had led to a rejection of *fides*, enshrining *ratio* alone. A belief that man had dethroned the gods of superstition led very quickly to the superstitious elevation of man into a self-worshiping god. Eventually, it led to the worship of the goddess Reason at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris during the Reign of Terror.

If the Enlightenment was characterized by scientism and skepticism — *i.e.*, the worship of science and the denigration of religion — the Romantic reaction to the Enlightenment was characterized by skepticism about science and by the resurrection of religion. Romanticism would emerge, in fact, as the reac-

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tion of inarticulate “faith” against inarticulate “reason” — heart worship at war with head worship. It was all a far cry from the unity of heart and head that had characterized Christian civilization. The Romantic reaction would, however, be a significant step in the right direction, leading many heart-searching Romantics to the heart of Rome. This was, at least, the case in England and France, though, in Germany, it led (*via* the genius of Wagner and the madness of Nietzsche) to the psychosis of Hitler.

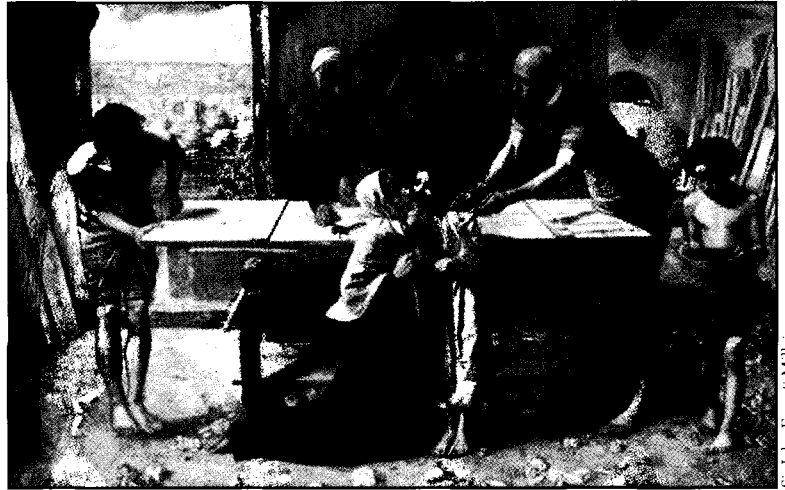
Arguably, the Romantic reaction in England began in 1798 with the publication of *Lyrical Ballads* by William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Published only nine years after the French Revolution, the poems in *Lyrical Ballads* represented the poets’ recoil from the rationalism that had led to the Reign of Terror. Wordsworth passed beyond the “serene and blessed mood” of optimistic pantheism displayed in his “Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey” to a full embrace of Anglican Christianity, as exhibited in the allegorical depiction of Christ in “Resolution and Independence.” Coleridge threw down the allegorical gauntlet of Christianity through the sublimation of the subliminal in “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner”; in his “Hymn Before Sunrise in the Vale of Chamouni,” he saw beyond majestic nature (*O Sovran Blanc!*) to the majesty of the God of nature:

Who made you glorious as the Gates of Heaven
Beneath the keen full moon? Who bade the sun
Clothe you with rainbows? Who, with living flowers
Of loveliest blue, spread garlands at your feet? —
God! let the torrents, like a shout of nations,
Answer! and let the ice-plains echo, God!
God! sing ye meadow-streams with gladsome voice!
Ye pine-groves, with your soft and soul-like sounds!
And they too have a voice, yon piles of snow,
And in their perilous fall shall thunder, God!

In their poetry, Wordsworth and Coleridge had leapt over the errors and terrors of the previous three centuries to rediscover the purity and passion of a Christian past. This pattern would be repeated in the various manifestations of neomedievalism that would follow in the wake of Wordsworth’s and Coleridge’s Romanticism. The Gothic Revival, heralded by the architect Augustus Pugin in the 1830’s and championed by the art critic John Ruskin 20 years later, attempted to discover a purer aesthetic through a return to medieval notions of beauty. The Oxford Movement, spearheaded by John Henry Newman, Edward Pusey, and John Keble, sought a return to a purer Catholic vision for the Church of England, bypassing the Reformation in an attempt to graft the Victorian Anglican Church onto the Catholic Church of medieval England through the promotion of Catholic liturgy and a Catholic understanding of the sacraments. The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, formed around 1850 by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, John Everett Millais, William Holman Hunt, and others, looked to a purer vision of art in the clarity of medieval and early Renaissance painting that existed, they believed, before the innovations of Raphael.

Perhaps the most important poetic voice to emerge from the Romantic reaction is that of Gerard Manley Hopkins, who was received into the Catholic Church by John Henry Newman in 1866, 21 years after Newman’s own conversion. Influenced by the pre-Reformation figures of Saint Francis and Duns Scotus,

and by the Counter-Reformation rigor and vigor of Saint Ignatius Loyola, Hopkins wrote poetry filled with the dynamism of Catholic orthodoxy. Unpublished in his own lifetime, Hopkins was destined to emerge as one of the most influential poets of the 20th century following the first publication of his verse in 1918, almost 30 years after his death.



Sir John Everett Millais

Although these manifestations of Romantic neomedievalism transformed 19th-century culture, countering the optimistic and triumphalistic scientism of the Victorian imperial psyche, it would be wrong to imply that Romanticism always led to medievalism. The neomedieval tendencies of what might be termed Light Romanticism were paralleled by a Dark Romanticism, epitomized by the life and work of Byron and Shelley, which tended toward nihilism and self-indulgent despair.

If Wordsworth and Coleridge were reacting against the rationalist iconoclasm of the French Revolution, Byron and Shelley seemed to be reacting against Wordsworth’s and Coleridge’s reaction. Greatly influenced by *Lyrical Ballads*, they were nonetheless uncomfortable with the Christian traditionalism that Wordsworth and Coleridge began to embrace. Byron devoted a great deal of the Preface to *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* to attacking the “monstrous mummeries of the middle ages,” and Shelley, in his “Defense of Poetry,” declared his loathing of Tradition by insisting that poets were slaves to the *Zeitgeist* and “the mirrors of the gigantic shadows which futurity casts upon the present.” Slaves of the spirit of the present and mirrors of the giant presence of the future, poets were warriors of Progress intent on vanquishing the superstitious remnants of Tradition. Perhaps these inanities could be excused as being merely the facile follies of youth, especially as there appeared to be signs that Byron yearned for something more solid than the inarticulate creedless deism espoused in “The Prayer of Nature” and indications also that Shelley’s militant atheism was softening into skylarking pantheism. Their early deaths, and the early death of their not-so-dark friend Keats, cut them off in the very life-throes of their groping for the light of meaning in the darkness of their self-centered and self-defeating grappling. Stealing upon them like a thief in the night, death has preserved them forever as icons of folly who often, almost in spite of themselves, attained heights of beauty and perception.

In comparing Wordsworth and Coleridge with Byron and Shelley, we see a parting of the ways between the high road of Light Romanticism and the low road of the Dark Romantics. Yet it would be wrong to assume that the parting of the ways was permanent and that, as with Kipling’s East and West, “never the

Romanticism and classicism can be said to represent attempts to put the fragments of post-Christian humpty-dumptydom together again.

twain shall meet." The two roads of Romanticism have more in common with the high road and the low road that lead to the "bonny, bonny banks of Loch Lomond," or, perhaps more appositely, they converge at last where all roads lead—at Rome. For, as befits a romance, Romanticism, even Dark Romanticism, often leads to Rome. The Byronic influence of Dark Romanticism crossed the channel and found itself baptized in the decadence of Baudelaire, Verlaine, and Huysmans, all of whom plumbed the depths of despair, discovered the reality of Hell, and fled in horror into the arms of Mother Church. Baudelaire was received into the Church on his deathbed, Verlaine converted in prison, and Huysmans, having dabbled with diabolism, ended his life in a monastery. The principal difference between the Dark Romanticism of Byron and Shelley and the decadence of Baudelaire, Verlaine, and Huysmans is that the former delved into the darkness of their own egos with nothing but Nothing to illumine their musings, whereas the latter delved

deep into their own inner darkness with the light of theology. The former were lost in circumlocutions of self-centered circumnavigation; the latter discovered the Beast that dwelt in the bottomless pit of self-obsession and, beating their chests, knelt at last before the Christ Whom their own sins had crucified. The French decadence was also characterized by its preoccupation with symbolism, which was itself a return to the mode of communication employed in medieval art.

If Dark Romanticism had crossed the channel in Byronic guise, metamorphosing into the symbolism of the French decadence, it returned under the patronage of Oscar Wilde, who was an aficionado of Baudelaire and Verlaine. Somewhat bizarrely and perhaps perversely, Wilde had read Huysmans' recently published decadent masterpiece, *A Rebours*, during his honeymoon in Paris, a novel that would greatly influence his own decadent tour de force, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. As with their French predecessors, the doyens of the English decadence also found their way to the Catholic Church, turning their back on debauchery and modernity in favor of traditional Christianity. Apart from Wilde himself, who was received into the Church on his deathbed, other leading figures of the English decadence who became Catholic include Aubrey Beardsley, Lionel Johnson, John Gray, Ernest Dowson and even the *enfant terrible* of the 1890's, Lord Alfred Douglas. The high road and the low road converged into the Roman road of conversion. The high road of sanctity was followed by such as Newman and Hopkins, both of whom became Catholic priests, whereas the low road of sin, the path of the Prodigal Son, was taken by a host of French and English Decadents. For, as Oscar Wilde never tired of reminding us, even the saints were sinners, and all sinners are called to be saints.

The Morality of Everyday Life: Rediscovering an Ancient Alternative to the Liberal Tradition

by Thomas Fleming

What passes for conservatism today is really nothing more than the impossible moral and social theories of the Renaissance and Enlightenment, in which universal abstractions, such as democracy and equality, are presented as hard truths, when, in fact, they have never existed in any society in human history. Nonetheless, they are to be applied worldwide, at the tip of a spear (or cruise missile) if necessary.

Dr. Fleming's alternative is rooted in "everyday life," the local realities of blood and soil, custom and tradition, friendship and faith, and in the wisdom born of the experiences these realities beget. This wisdom finds expression in folktales and fables, in ancient Hebrew Scriptures and Greek philosophy, and in medieval casuistry. It is the method to solving ethical problems great and small, and it is the method that undergirds authentic conservatism.

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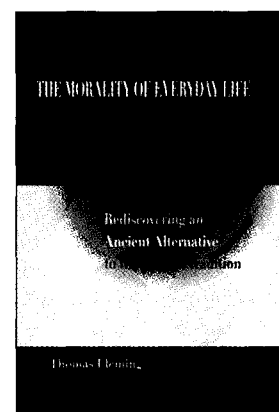
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The Loving Look

A Cure for the Epicure

by Hugh Barbour, O.Praem.

"Thou art beautiful above the sons of men: grace is poured abroad in thy lips."

—Psalm 44(45):3



Vico Consorti

One warm, late-summer afternoon in Eastern North Carolina, a few hundred primary-school children poured out of their classrooms and waited for their buses to take them far and wide around the county. My aunt, the principal, stood by the curb, surveying the complex arrangements to prevent any little children from boarding the wrong bus. A cute seven-year-old black girl crowned with many brightly colored barrettes rocked pensively from foot to foot as her bus rolled in to take her home. With a schoolmarm's cheerful condescension, my aunt complimented her, "My, you've made yourself so beautiful today, Sugar!" The little girl gave the swift and startling reply, "Oh, no Miz Brooks, only Jesus make you beautiful!" Thus, the example from innocence.

"The young man who rings the bell at the brothel is unconsciously looking for God." This is the very broad moral inference drawn by the wise priest in *The World, the Flesh, and Father Smith* by Scottish Catholic novelist Bruce Marshall. Marshall (whose novels were popular in preconciliar days and whose papers—worthy of study by tradition-loving Christians—are at Georgetown) describes the Last Rites given to an old merchant marine in a brothel to which the priest has been called by the at least minimally pious proprietress. The seaman cannot be sorry for his many visits to similar places around the world throughout his long life. These were the only beautiful things he had ever had in his hard earthly voyage. The priest, eager to save him by short shrift as death draws near, lands on a saving formula. "Are you sorry that you're not sorry?" Yes, he can

muster up such an imperfect act of contrition. Absolved, he is anointed and united to the living flesh of Jesus. Thus, the example from experience.

What is the role of beauty in religion? Can aestheticism lead a man to God, or is the contemplation of the Beautiful the reward rather than the way? Leaving the iconoclast answer to its ecumenical anathema, we seek in vain for a serene and definitive resolution of the problem from within the broad bounds of orthodoxy, since, for the orthodox, the question is not speculative and universal but practical and concrete, like the question "How much time should I devote to prayer?" or "How much should I fast and feast?"

Augustine needed to fret over the choice between *recto tono* recitative and orientalizing Ambrosian chant. For the Desert Fathers before him, there was not even any notion of a choice for a monastic, and so they gave him reason to wonder. Latin Cluniacs and Cistercians, Slavonic Josephites and Transvolgans disagreed among themselves on the correct degree of liturgical splendor. Beato Angelico and Savonarola were from the same order, and each lived in his time at San Marco in Florence, but they hardly had the same inclination regarding iconography. Juan de la Cruz reveals this tension within a single person and tradition, severely proscribing preferences for particular holy images and objects of devotion and yet meticulously comparing the life of prayer to the crafting, polychroming, and gilding of a Spanish baroque sculpture, and writing poetry that is laden with the five-fold imagery of the senses.

Until modern times, the question of the role of aesthetics in religion has been a monastic one, not unlike the disputes over the extent and nature of religious poverty. The aestheti-

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cal question was an ascetical question, not so much a question of whether but of how much to make use of the visible, audible, and sweet-smelling in cult and contemplation. Christian society could, in consequence, bear both maximalist and minimalist answers. Deeply convinced about man's immaterial soul and his capacity to know and possess — indeed, as Aristotle says, to *be* all things by intellect and will — and that this capacity was first awakened by the activity of the senses, though fallen and sorely weakened by the passions, the classical, biblical, patristic, and medieval man could rightly ponder their value in that ascent to Beauty and assent to Truth which is called “happiness.” The question of aesthetics was not yet a troubled and longing one about the nature, hope, and duration of happiness but a tough, practical one about what is fitting and useful in laying hold of what is certain.

Saint Thomas teaches that the Beautiful does not please the appetite simply, but the apprehension of the mind as well, and so beauty is ultimately more about becoming beautiful than desiring beauty. For this we have to go to the Beautiful Himself.

Modern culture has found it necessary to develop a non-ascetical aesthetic, which can broadly be called Romantic rather than monastic. Here, there is no practical question but a universal anxiety about the possibility of knowing and enjoying the Beautiful. The Kantian metaphysical impasse placed the whole burden of access to universal transcendent realities on the moral life of man, a moral life divorced from contemplation, a sheer exercise of the will. Yet the access to divine things that was cut off on the level of the intellect was less successfully denied to the experience of the senses. The *Critique of Judgment* was never so effective as the *Critique of Pure Reason*. The Romantics took very fruitful advantage of this “weakness” of the Kantian account of aesthetics. Although a scientific account of metaphysical realities has been regarded as a naive and unintelligible enterprise from Kant until the present day, the same has not been true of aesthetic approaches to God, the immortal soul, eternity, and the angelic spirits.

Although sense is not intellect, it is knowledge. If there is an authentic aesthetic approach to God and the soul, then there is the hope of a recovery of the higher, intellectual knowledge of which sense knowledge is the beginning. Aestheticism can thus lead circuitously back to the ancient security in the knowledge of spiritual realities. Here is the nobler vein in the Romantic reaction to modernity. This explains the tendency found in all the various Romanticisms toward a conversion (not a rever-

sion!) to premodernity.

There is, however, another and equally Romantic possibility: the sensualism of the Epicurean. What if the contemplation of sensible things is the only contemplation there can be? Then aesthetics will become only the holiday enjoyment of brute empiricism, an intense experience of the present moment, but hardly an experience of the transcendent and eternal. From the premodern point of view, the former “reactionary” aesthetic is more humane and salutary, but, given the post-Kantian presuppositions common to both approaches, the latter is more rigorous and internally consistent.

The problem is, as the monks knew well, that these two aesthetic approaches are not really exclusive of each other in the concrete, subjective life of an individual man. The human heart is clearly able to fall in an instant from the grateful thought of God reflected in a beautiful body He has made to a simple case of sensual attraction, and who is so wise as to be able to discern which of the two is the case, or whether they even are always incompatible? An infinite gap separates Dorian Gray, as he admires his collection of ecclesiastical textiles folded away in his upper-hall chests, and the silent novice sacristan working away in an abbey; and yet, as with Dives and Abraham, the one place can be seen from the other, and both men in life have thirsted for the same Beauty. As Aquinas says in the *Pange Lingua*, “Of a like taking, how diverse the outcome!” And the good monk will not assume he plays the part of Lazarus but will continually examine himself, lest his longing be only for condemnation.

“O worship the Lord in the holiness of beauty.” This is the wag’s transposition of the terms of the invitational psalm of the American Prayer Book’s Morning Prayer. Whatever the current state of aesthetics in Anglican worship may be, we turn, not unsuitably, to an Anglican, though not always a good one, to show how the points made thus far are realized. Of writers in the English language at least, Walter Pater is the one who most of all has considered the role of the beautiful in religion, of the aesthetic approach to God, and this while having also expounded a theory strongly opposed to such an approach.

Walter Pater’s *The Renaissance* taught the most pure empiricist aesthetic imaginable, concentrating on the development of taste and the capacity for a sustained and appreciative gaze empowering the observer, in the words of the famed final protreptic admonition of his book, “to burn with this hard, gemlike flame.” There is nothing beyond “momentary enjoyment,” as the priest grandson of Romantic poet William Wordsworth noted in an outraged letter to Pater, expressing his deep concern about the effect his work would have on the young: “Could you indeed have known about the dangers into which you were likely to lead minds weaker than your own, you would, I believe, have paused.” The younger Wordsworth’s fears turned out to be true enough, and so T.S. Eliot remarked years later that Pater’s essay “propagated some confusion between life and art which is not wholly irresponsible for some untidy lives.”

G.K. Chesterton was kinder to Pater, and, refusing to move too quickly to a moral critique, he points out precisely where the problem lies for this beauty-for-beauty’s-sake aesthetic on its own experiential grounds. In *The Victorian Age in Literature*, G.K. remarks,

Ruskin let himself go about railways. Newman let him-

self go about Kingsley. Pater cannot let himself go for the excellent reason that he wants to stay at the point where all the keenest emotions meet, as he explains in the splendid peroration of *The Renaissance*. The only objection to being where all the keenest emotions meet is that you feel none of them.

In *Marius the Epicurean*, Pater attempts to answer his critics and to correct his imprudence by writing a philosophical romance that is, on his own admission, about an empiricist, aesthetical *iter* that ends at the threshold not just of religion but even of Heaven. Pater writes, in a letter to a friend, “I regard this present matter as a sort of duty. For you know, I think that there is . . . a sort of religious phase possible for the modern mind . . . the conditions of which phase it is the main object of my design to convey.” About *Marius*, Eliot sniffs, indisposed to forgive Pater for *The Renaissance*, “I do not believe that Pater, in this work, has influenced a single first-rate mind of a later generation.” Not worrying about being “first rate”—that is, not confusing intellectual probity with snobbishness—we are happy to use Pater’s not negligible insights, even if Eliot may be right about the question of Pater’s influence. As John Senior pointed out, albeit in a different context, before the hundred “great books,” there are a thousand good ones.

Pater describes the early Christian liturgy, as it begins to make its mark on the soul of the earnest young Marius under the influence of his friend Cornelius.

And then, in this hour of expansion, as if now at last the Catholic church might venture to show her outward lineaments as they really were, worship—the “beauty of holiness,” nay! the elegance of sanctity—was developed, with a bold and confident gladness . . . The esthetic charm of the Catholic church, her evocative power over all that is eloquent and expressive in the better mind of man, her outward comeliness, her dignifying convictions about human nature: all this . . . we may see in those charmed moments towards the end of the second century . . . What might seem harsh as dogma was already justifying itself as worship; according to the sound rule: *Lex orandi Lex credendi*.

Here is the key insight: The sensible, sacramental incarnation of the universal and invisible world of metaphysical beings renders that world credible and effective in man, whose first approach is through his senses.

So it is that Marius, without yet believing, comes to see that it is only in worship that he can find happiness on earth. He discovers this in the house of Cecilia in Trastevere:

Itē! Missa est!—cried the young deacons . . . the natural soul of worship in him had at last been satisfied as never before. He felt, as he left that place, that he must hereafter experience often a longing memory, a kind of thirst for all this over again. And it seemed moreover to define what he must require of the powers, whatsoever they might be that had brought him into the world at all, to make him not unhappy in it.

But beyond this world, and without having made explicit profession of faith, Marius finally finds sensible, sacramental salvation by a kind of noble default. Going, in the place of his

friend, with the other condemned confessors and worn out by his ordeal, he reaches the hour of death.

In the moments of his extreme helplessness their mystic bread had been placed between his lips. Gentle fingers had applied to hands and feet, to all those old passage-ways of the senses, through which the world had come and gone for him, now so dim and obstructed, a medicinal oil. It was the same people who . . . took up his remains and buried them secretly . . . but with joy also, holding his death, according to their generous view in this matter, to have been of the nature of a martyrdom; and martyrdom, as the church had always said, a kind of sacrament with plenary grace.

We have returned to Marshall’s old marine; unable to be perfectly convinced of the evil of his frequenting of beautiful bawdy houses, he musters up an imperfect act of love, and the sacrament supplies for the defect: “Faith for all defects supplying where the feeble senses fail”—thus Aquinas, whose reaction to prostitutes was rather different, but who understood the seaman’s way to salvation. This is the best the modern aesthete can hope for, being, in the end, no better than the crude libertine; he finds salvation in the same way. Augustine, before his conversion, was right to envy the happy drunkard as he does in the *Confessions*.

The human heart is clearly able to fall
in an instant from the grateful thought
of God reflected in a beautiful body He has
made to a simple case of sensual attraction,
and who is so wise as to be able to discern
which of the two is the case, or whether
they even are always incompatible?

To treat further of Aquinas and of a more serene and ancient aesthetic than Pater’s anguished modern one, we have to return to the little black girl who spoke like Denis the Areopagite, and that would be another article. Suffice it to say here that Saint Thomas teaches that the Beautiful does not please the appetite simply, but the apprehension of the mind as well, and so beauty is ultimately more about becoming beautiful than desiring beauty. For this we have to go to the Beautiful Himself. In Mark 10, in the passage about the rich young man, “Jesus looking on him loved him . . . and he went away sorrowful.” In Luke 22, “the Lord turning looked on Peter . . . and Peter going out wept bitterly.” That gaze renders the soul beautiful by a sorrow that is perfect: for “only Jesus make you beautiful.” c

Conservatism as Medicine

Nature Versus the State of Nature

by Claude Polin

What are the basic tenets of modernity? What is the mind and temper of modern man? I would feel rather foolish to try to reply in a few paragraphs if I did not think that the spirit of modernity boils down eventually to only one idea that reappears constantly under an indefinite variety of guises.

This basic principle may be phrased in the following way: Modernity was born when God disappeared behind man (when mankind became the true god, as Auguste Comte would have said), which means when (since there is no reason why a man as a man should be superior to any other) every man thought of himself as a god in his own right. Anyone who doubts that there is flesh to that idea might reflect upon René Descartes' avowed ambition: to discard anything he may have learned and, relying solely on his intellect and judgment, all by himself, build a new science, both of himself and of the world, through which he could become an immortal being, master and owner of the whole universe. By and by, that amounted to creating a man and a world anew. Descartes was not deranged—unless all moderns, whether stupid or brilliant, were also, in taking Descartes as a model.

The same attitude is apparent in the widespread idea that every man was born and is endowed with an unfettered freedom, with an absolute right to think and act as he wishes. ("Man was born free, and everywhere he is in chains," said Rousseau.) There are no legitimate limits to that freedom unless man has an interest in abiding by them (which does not mean, therefore, that he is not entitled to break them when it becomes his personal interest to do so). When there is no God, man is a law unto himself. Again, before anyone thinks this is a totally abstract notion, let me mention that it is the basic principle of the French Declaration of the Rights of Man, which all modern societies claim and boast to embody. But that is what the very fabric of modern societies shows even more clearly.

Is not democracy the predominant political model for all modern societies? But what does democracy mean to the average citizen, if not government by the people, meaning by each citizen (*i.e.*, by himself), for the people (*i.e.*, a government that cannot decide anything detrimental to him), and, of course, of the people (*i.e.*, the others)? What is democracy if not sovereignty of the people, and what is this sovereignty if not the sum total of all individual sovereignties, meaning the absolute rejection by every citizen of any sort of submission to any man other than himself? Is not the general will supposed to be *my* will? Democracy is not the antithesis of monarchy; it is the democratizing of monarchy. Democracy differs from simple anarchy because it recognizes, as a most regrettable drawback, the necessity for each citizen not to do unto others what one would not

want others to do to oneself; but this principle becomes agreeable to democracy when it is understood as not doing it unless it can be done without being caught. Democracy does not leave any room for morals; the only absolute it acknowledges is the will of the individual. There is no such thing as a republican democracy, for democracy excludes any *res publica*.

The same principle appears in that other predominant feature of our societies: our devotion to economic matters. The obsession with the economy is not exclusively the product of a desire to butter one's bread. It is also born out of the very simple fact that the economy is the only common ground that is left among individuals who are separate worlds unto themselves. For the core of the modern economy is not so much production or industry as it is exchange or trade: Production increases only as much as there are opportunities for trading what is produced. But, while exchange is natural when it is only occasional, to rely on exchange as a way to support oneself, either by selling or by having to buy, which is the basic characteristic of modern societies, is an altogether different thing. Individuals who base their relationship exclusively or primarily on exchange do not really relate: Who cares about the shoe-shop owner, provided he has the pair of shoes you like? There are no friends when you do business. Exchange is the only human relation that establishes a semblance of society when everyone is too free to accept any kind of social ties. Economy, therefore, prevails necessarily in a society in which everyone cares only about himself and has no need for others except for his personal use. In other words, a society based on its economy is a society whose only god is the individual.

But there is more. Since, in modern society, there is no respect for others, it is obvious that, in any exchange, everyone has a natural proclivity to get more and give less. If the human gods cannot afford solitude, they have to be either good gods or good fighters, the object of the game being for each to put the other at his mercy. Hence, the third belief of the modern mentality: Society is always bound to be the pitfall of mankind unless redeemed by one of two things: either what Jean-Jacques Rousseau called the "renaturation" of man (which meant depriving him altogether of any self-interest, an operation that ended up requesting the assistance of the good Dr. Guillotine) or the manufacturing of such a quantity of material goods that men would not have to fight over them. (The horrible Mr. Hobbes was not, after all, entirely mistaken—though hardly fair to wolves—provided one only considers a condition of scarcity: Any animal will go wild when starving; so will men.) In other words, if the latter is true, man will be good to man when everyone has a washing machine; unlike children, he will be lovable, loving, and loved when he is spoiled. Opulence is the key to sociable living.

This is no figment of my imagination; this is the philosophy of Progress, the unwritten law of our lives, and the foun-

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tainhead of all enlightened policies. This is all that Marxism is about—but it is also what liberalism is about. Scarcity is the root of evil; productivity, the answer. Why is there violence in our cities? Because not everybody can afford to play tennis or take ski holidays. This is why the masses hail science, the real god that can multiply bread.

There is one drawback, though. Before everyone has everything (according to his needs), there are all those times when everyone will try to take advantage of everyone else, and some will obviously succeed better. So everyone agrees (with a guilty conscience for the winners, and resentment and envy for the losers, who feel cheated out of their due) that everyone should share wealth, which is always somehow illegitimate when unevenly distributed, and which, therefore, must be redistributed. That is the real Rights of Man, as Marx very well understood: If men are born with equal rights, they have a right to anything their fellow men have that they do not have.

This is why true conservatism is so relevant to our times. Unless one is addicted to liberal or socialist philosophy, one should not have much difficulty ascertaining the shortcomings of the world this philosophy has begotten. A world of gods, each claiming to be the center of the world, is not viable, pure and simple. It is actually a very sick world. He who wants to play the angel will act as a beast; our societies are ridden with war, tyranny, injustice, and affliction—and with the particularly vicious propensity that moves the hydropic to drink the water that will kill him.

War? That is all too blatant. Hobbes was not hallucinating when he saw men naturally at perpetual war with one another; he was only a modern, thinking in modern terms. For how can two atoms, each a world unto itself, go their particular way and not end up colliding as soon as their orbits get too close? It is actually a self-fulfilling prophecy. There is no society between animals that have nothing in common except their respective cravings. One may also put it this way: Whatever the available goods, no god likes to have equals or to have exactly the same amount as his neighbor. *Opulence* is an empty word. One may argue that there is a lot more compassion these days than ever before. That may be, but is that love for others, is that charity, or is that the kind of transient sensitivity that self-centered individuals are so prone to? (I do not mention solidarity, which is too obviously a way for the richer to ease their consciences and buy social peace.) Logic has it that, in a society whose heart is the economy, individuals may feel pity but no disinterested love for their fellow men. They feel pity when they feel unharmed by some evil that might threaten them, which shows in the way they prefer to send help to those that are not too close to them.

Tyranny? It is equally obvious that, the more men claim to be equal (the more they refuse to acknowledge any natural superiority of anyone over others), the more they are unable to live in society unless some physical power forces them to do so. Equality breeds constraint or disintegration; a sand castle needs an external agent to hold it together. Now, of course, democrats claim there is no legitimate power but the one that belongs to all. Yet nobody has ever answered how it came to be possible for Peter to think himself his own master while having to obey Paul, just because Paul claims his will is not actually his own but Peter's. Democratic tyranny would be obvious if most citizens' vanity did not find some satisfaction in that sham. Marx was right to despise democracy as formal, but is it not flattering, even formally, to be considered as a sovereign?

Injustice? How could there be any justice when most social relationships are grounded on sheer force? When two social individuals are at war, what can regulate their intercourse but force? When something is offered at a given price, is it because the manufacturer thinks it a just reward for his work, or because he does not think he could sell his product for more? How could there be justice in a democratic society in which the standards of justice themselves are superseded by the sovereignty of the people, which consists in declaring just what the sovereign people think is just? Am I kidding? Just think of abortion being legalized by several Western parliaments: Doesn't that amount to having the right of life or death over fellow men?



H. Draper

Affliction? How can a society avert calamity when it considers mankind entitled to play at will with the natural fabric of things, to build below sea level with no regard for possible flooding, to duplicate individuals and create freaks that are both one person and another at the same time, to unleash primeval energy that runs amok, to manufacture medicine without knowing its long-term effects—in a word, to behave like a child starting a car without knowing how to drive it? On a deeper level, if happiness is the fulfillment of one's desires, how can any fulfillment be expected for somebody who prides himself on being gifted with an ability to find no limit to his desires, which is exactly what absolute freedom is? No one can fill up a pitcher that has no bottom. If nature is taken as a bond that man is free to break, no one can experience pleasures but passing ones, because there is none that is naturally fulfilling. Hedonism, frenetic consumption, is the absolute reverse of happiness; it actually rests on the inner knowledge that one is chasing after something that will forever elude him, the accomplishment of one's own self.

Our societies are sick. They need doctors. Now, what is a doctor, if not someone who knows the conditions of health—i.e., who knows what is unnatural (what threatens life) because he knows what is natural, what life requires to go on. And that is what conservatism is all about: True conservatives are neither old hats clinging to their dust, nor privileged people hanging on to the *status quo*, nor, again, people living in the clouds and dreaming of utopian cities. Conservatives are no preachers or utopian do-gooders (you ought to, you have to, and so forth). They are just realistic people saying that things last only as long as they keep being what they are by nature, because their nature is nothing but the way they are made and, therefore, the only way they can last. Conservatives are unable to prevent Icarus from trying to fly; they are just warning him of the natural outcome of his endeavor.

Hence, the general principle and the gist of their diagnosis concerning present Western societies: Everything that *can* go wrong with them *will* go wrong, because they have ridiculed the idea that there is a *nature* of things, whether physical or spiritual (to the point of forgetting what the word may mean), because they live in an utterly unnatural way. What is more fashionable today than going about boasting that man has no nature except to make his own nature? What is more simple-minded nowadays than the notion that there are things you do or do not do just because they are natural or go against nature? Now, does that term turn conservatives into blue-blooded ecologists? It would, if many ecologists were not either like unnatural political radishes, white outside and red inside, or like youngsters too lazy to yearn for toys they would enjoy but would have to work to get.

But then, it might be asked whether having a nature means anything anyway when it seems possible for things to go against their own nature. The answer is simple, though central to conservatism. No inanimate object can go against its own nature by itself: Water does not come to a boil and vanish into gas by itself. Animated beings such as animals can behave unnaturally, but again by accident, and rarely survive their doing so: It is not because a horse falls off a cliff that he flies. In other words, man has the dubious privilege of being the only creature who not only has a nature like all other beings but is also naturally capable of shunning it. There is nothing mysterious about that natural ability: It is the price he pays for being gifted with consciousness—*i.e.*, with a capacity to dissociate himself from whatever he is conscious of, whether it be his environment or himself. Man is the only animal able to see himself otherwise than as what he is, which is why his nature is to himself both what he actually is and what he should be.

In other words, what true conservatism primarily teaches is simply that, by disregarding his own nature as well as nature in general, man is endangering his own existence and can be a self-destructive animal. The lesson is two-sided. On one hand, it is that drinking beyond natural measure destroys the liver and, ultimately, the individual; on the other hand, that, since nature is a principle of conservation, it should always be sought after and respected. That is why conservatives are so attached to prescription. Time appears to them as the voice and test of nature herself: The longer something has lasted, the better chance it stands to be something natural. That is why the conservative will bow to tradition, custom, habit, and old institutions of all sorts—not out of superstition or just plain faintheartedness, but out of steady wisdom and reasoned foresightedness.

What is the nature of man? It is not preposterous to try to answer in a few words, provided one tries to go for the fountainhead of whatever else he may be. For if you assume that man is part of nature and is endowed by nature with consciousness, is it not blindingly obvious that his nature is to be, to the full extent of his ability to do so, a willing part of nature, be it the whole universe, the whole of the living world, or the whole of mankind? This means several things: first that, by nature, he is not a world unto himself, not an end in himself, and is as meaningless, if left to himself, as a note without the melody that gives it its true value. This is just the reverse of Rousseau's famous statement that every man is "a perfect and solitary whole." For the modern mind, to be only a part is demeaning; for the conservative mind, it is mere sanity. It takes a deranged mind to think of oneself as a self-sufficient being. Only crazy people used to

think they were gods: Now, it is pandemic.

Second, to be really a part means to take part actively, actually to contribute to the whole. And that is why conservatives are no socialists. Even though the latter extol community among men, their implicit assumption is that there is real community only when individuals may consider society to be somehow indebted to them (which is consistent with the importance the individual has in his own eyes). On the contrary, the conservative will always ask himself what he can do for the others. That is why it is not demeaning to be only a part, any more than it is for a note to be only a component of a chord; without this note, there would not be any chord, but only discord. The weight of the whole does not oppress the individual; it enhances his own weight. But it entails the necessity of bringing something to the whole, bringing something that bears the personal mark of the contributor, and finally bringing it by oneself (in complete contradiction with the modern propensity to be supported by the whole). To do one's job, to be an autonomous man, is the natural behavior of the citizen of a natural society.

And third, to take part means to do something really useful and meaningful for the whole. If contributing to the whole resembles a note's contributing to a harmony, not just any note can be added to the melody because it has a whim to be added. Many may disrupt the harmony; only certain ones are necessary. In a similar way, the workings of the whole do not require an indefinite number of more or less arbitrary functions: Nature never does anything in vain; no human body can survive long with two heads. Nature is life; life is harmony; harmony is proportion between definite components.

These fundamental principles summarily sketched are not metaphysical, nor even abstract; they are blueprints both for a good individual life and for good social institutions, because they are plainly what history and experience keep proving.

Huge towns and gigantic empires are very unnatural surroundings for men. The latter are on a par with apples; they rot when you pile them up. It was standard speculation in the old days to wonder how many citizens a community should comprise; it was also a very wise topic. History has shown in several ways that small is beautiful. One is that there is no way to unite huge numbers of men unless by force; why should they hold together when they are too numerous not to be total strangers to one another? There obviously cannot be any *homonoia*, any unity from the bottom up, unless between small numbers. There has never been any empire without the will of a despot to frame it. Another way for common sense and experience to prove the same truth is to realize that no man can hold a significant role on a stage where there are also an indefinite number of actors playing at the same time or successively. That means it would not make much sense for an individual to be part of what is usually called the general society of mankind. Of course, man as a man is part of mankind, but to feel he is an actual part of a whole, he needs that whole not to be so big that it will reduce him to a speck. That is why the family, the village, the country always have been such a natural part of man's surroundings; they are like concentric circles that relate him to mankind—and possibly beyond, to the universe. In other words, nature herself thus shows the artificiality of a universal unified society of mankind. History shows that there is a natural way for this unity to occur, at least inasmuch as it is naturally possible: Thus, when the Greeks thought one of their cities was growing past its natural size, they would simply duplicate it, meaning some of them would emigrate to found a colony. In

other words, unity does not result from absorption of small cities by a larger one but evolves out of a similarity of indefinitely multiplied small entities. In a similar vein, even the Founding Fathers, though they needed power for the new American federation, never imagined giving up the diversity of the particular original states.

Nature has another way of showing the artificiality of an organized body of which nations would be the organs. For if man, by nature, tends to be a part of a community, that community has to have enough substance for any part that is played in it also to have substance. To be part of a whole that is not a whole is not to be a part at all. In other words, it is only natural that communities be as much as possible self-sufficient, autarchic. The general society of mankind is by nature made of smaller societies that can help one another but are not meant by nature to meld. That is why autarky was for centuries—until the rise of 17th-century mercantilism—supposed to be the virtue of well-run political bodies.

On the other hand, taking part in the whole of a community presupposes the latter's unity, which means that the natural city obviously requires the different roles to be complementary. This has not much to do with Adam Smith's vision of the division of labor. All sorts of work require coordination and cooperation. But work, if it is to be compatible with true social coherence, is by nature an activity profitable not only to one or several individuals but to the whole community. Big corporations that seek their own profit may give work and good salaries to lots of people, but they obviously go against the nature of a community when they become a community within a community, when their service to the community is subordinate to their own prosperity. At the same time, it is only a modern fantasy to promote work whatever it is: This deprives work of its dignity by making it only an unpleasant but inevitable way to earn some means not to work. In other words, the healthier a society is, the more its citizens fulfill some kind of real public service or office. Thus, traditional European societies were organized into corporations (guilds), and that did include, as well as craftsmen, men of arms and men in charge of the souls. I leave aside the question of who is selected to go where but would point out that there is a natural tendency to hereditary holding of lay positions, when there is some natural activity involved. One must observe that the number of functions required for the natural working of a society is therefore limited, which means limited to the basic requirements of material life, on one hand, and spiritual life, on the other. (It is doubtful that rap music is essential to the natural functioning of society, even if it is hugely profitable to its makers.) This is why a healthy society was often referred to as an organism (a body whose every part was instrumental to its survival).

Now one may ask how to assess which functions are necessary to a community and which are not. The answer lies with what has been said above. If it is man's nature to be a social animal—i.e., to play a meaningful part in a society—that society must be understood somehow as an end in itself, which means having, whatever other end it may ascribe to itself, a primary goal of being as self-sufficient as possible. Any profession that is necessary to the self-sufficiency of a community is therefore necessary to that community.

Now this entails a consequence undoubtedly horrifying for the modern mind. Such a city has indeed to limit its own material expectations to what it can more or less provide by itself to

its citizens. In other words, a natural society is a frugal society. It is no more natural to eat cherries in the winter than to enjoy gadgets that come from the Far East because that is where they can be produced cheaply. The citizen stands to lose whatever goods cannot be produced locally and, particularly, to give up whatever pleasures he may derive from artificial intercourse with more or less exotic providers. He will be offered fewer goods and will probably have to pay more for them. (It is an old wisdom that necessary things should not be too cheap: The physiocrats still remembered it in the middle of the 18th century.) The individual who feels endowed with a right to universal consumption will not be pleased. But the conservative might argue, as an aside, that he would rather pay a little more for savory local food than less for mass-produced fast food.

Let us remember that the conservative—life-conserving, health conscious—view of man is that of a creature endowed with a double nature, a sociable and an unsociable one, a life-promoting one and a self-destructive one. Hence, it is logical for conservatives to advocate the natural necessity to combat the latter and encourage the former; to combat the individual's tendency to consider himself as an end for the others; and to educate him—literally, to draw out into the open and turn into habit the individual's propensity to play a role in the entity he inhabits. No man, unless he has lost his right to that qualification, can totally ignore what is natural to him. (Educating a man is not training a horse.) That inner core may be smothered by neglect or by folly, however. Talking is the privilege of man; but if a newborn were to live among animals, his ability to talk would wither away. (Such kids have been discovered here and there in the past—for instance, Victor de l'Aveyron, a child discovered in the Aveyron region of France in the 19th century. He was living like an animal, unable to speak at the approximate age of eight or ten.) Health is natural to man, but it takes a doctor to teach man what is bad for him. Thus, ever since the Greeks, at least in the Western world, all those who concern themselves with the health of political bodies have always considered it their paramount duty to teach the best ways (whether technical or moral) for an individual to take part in the general concert of things, which is to say, to inculcate him with a spirit of service (the reverse of the contemporary obsession with the self). For centuries, this task was supposed to be entrusted to men who had the time to learn the ways of nature: men of experience, of learning, knowledgeable about history, curious about what things are, able to take a disinterested look at the torrent of current events—all of which points to older men. Just think of what moderns condescendingly call primitive societies. They all had a common feature: respect for their wise men, their elders.

Now, are conservatives dreaming? Certainly, they are made to look like dreamers, if not dusty old fools hating youth and progress. But another thing is certain: Conservatism is all about what is natural and what is not. Conservatism is the voice of nature, pure and simple. Assuredly, men are free to go against nature. So either the idea of nature is hollow, and contemporaries stand to prove they can escape chaos—which is what mankind has unsuccessfully tried to do ever since the erection of the Tower of Babel—or conservatism is right and there is no man who can fail to hear the voice of nature, and then it is just a question of having enough people to dare to appear as dusty old fools and go about with their universal message. Unless, of course, the Western man has lived too long without education, and, like Victor de l'Aveyron, he is too old to learn, even though he is still young enough to run to his death.

Pugin and the Gothic Dream

Theology in the Architecture

by James Patrick

When peace came to Europe in 1815, Britain was in the unique position of possessing empire, wealth, and power, which would make possible a century of commercial and industrial growth and prosperity. There were disquieting signs, however. The capitalism that Mill and Ricardo would advance was entering a mature phase, so that the age of the impersonal enterprises, involving millions of pounds and pursued at arm's length from any responsible person for nothing but profit, was unfolding. The life of man was passing from the land to the city. The way of making things was passing from the household or the shop to the factory. The Baconian project, the ability to master nature such that her secrets could be used for the comfort of mankind, was at last literally delivering the goods—the 1830's being the hinge on which modern technology turns. If, at mid-19th century, England was giddy on the subject of religion, this was surely not the case when the Napoleonic Wars ended in 1815. There were just 29 Easter communions at St. Paul's Cathedral in 1809. Reform was in the air, with the implication that, if there were no reform, there might be revolution. So while, on one hand, there were the facts of commercial prosperity and a rising middle class, the increase of the culture of comfort, and the first hints that medicine could become a science, perceptive souls saw that all was not well in the heart of the civilization.

There were two obvious signs of malaise. Capitalism and the Industrial Revolution, while they destroyed the remnants of the old half-paternal civilization, did not spread their blessings abroad equally, a problem that Marx and the socialists tried to answer. Second, English religion had entered a decline from which it would not easily recover. The Tractarians and the Oxford Movement attempted to invigorate what had become moribund during the age of rationalism. On a deeper level, however, the society had asked the wrong question and gotten the right answer. Souls grew empty as pockets grew full. But everyone did not assume that the answer to the problem of the 19th century was economic. Some suggested that the reason the world was growing uglier and more cruel was rooted in the devastation of the human spirit, and chief among these prophets was Augustus Northmore Welby Pugin, who thought the answer lay in remedievalizing the world.

Pugin considered the 15th and 16th centuries a calamity that could be compensated for only by returning to what had gone before. The causality was intermittently unclear. He was capable of writing, on one day, as though the Renaissance with its classicism was the villain and, on another, as though Protestantism had caused it all, but Pugin was sure that classicism and infidelity were somehow partners in the destruction of the medieval world. Before Pugin could have reached this conclusion, other

themes must have fallen in place. Broadly, it was necessary that Romanticism should take another look at the past and reverse the judgment that the art and architecture of the Middle Ages was the work of a barbarian culture—for that was the studied implication of the adjective *Gothic*. It was easy enough to argue that the advent of an architecture of tall churches with pointed arches, crockets, and finials, and all manner of glorious detail and decoration had occurred just after the Normans settled in—Caen, with its tall naves and twin towers thrown up against the sky may have been the beginning—so, *post hoc propter hoc*, Gothic it was. The first use of the term is often attributed to John Evelyn in his diary for 1626, but it is notable that Gianlorenzo Bernini, when he spoke of medieval architecture, called the style simply “modern” or “German”—*moderna*, because it was not *antica*, and German, because it was always northern. But “Gothic” stuck, especially in England, and, throughout the Renaissance and Enlightenment, the contrast between the architecture of the Enlightenment, a transformation of Renaissance style that the 18th century claimed to have been based on reason, and the architecture of the Middle Ages, presented as the product of superstition, was relentlessly urged.

In England, this renewed popular interest in medieval architecture had begun with streams of influence that converged. There had always been something that could be called medieval or castellated buildings in England—the occasional country house or church tower. The late-18th century saw the construction of at least two great Gothic country houses. About 1780, Horace Walpole, who had already established his interest in things medieval by writing the *Castle of Otranto*—perhaps the first chivalric novel featuring the feudal despot, the venerable priest, the virtuous but melancholy damsel—built Strawberry Hill near Twickenham; later, William Beckford built Fonthill Abbey. The novelists helped—especially Walter Scott, many of whose novels popularized the Middle Ages, often supplying imagery with a flavor of Gothic architecture.

In the 1830's, an aesthetic of affect took its revenge on what had been supposed to be an aesthetic of more or less pure reason. At the same time, a philosophy of imagination, rooted in Kant's *Critique of Judgment* (a book protected from the popular gaze by a studied obtuseness), became academically respectable, and something similar to Kant's theory was popularized in England by Coleridge, who, in the *Biographia Literaria*, defended imagination as a way of knowing.

Out of this brew came the sudden insight that art and architecture mean something. The criticism of art had been carried on since Longinus—indeed, since Plato—under the canon that great or even good art possesses certain objective qualities: unity, symmetry, *claritas* or radiance, and, in architecture, fittingness or usefulness. But nobody had suggested that the “Exaltation of the Eucharist” or Caravaggio's *St. Matthew* meant anything oth-

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er than what one saw. Then, suddenly, art, and especially architecture, became capable of telling significant stories about the soul of the society in which the particular work has been created. Of course, the magnitude and beauty of Chartres and Amien could be read as signs that Christianity was valued in Amien and Chartres, but the new theory, later called the expression theory, and its semi-theological English companion, called ecclesiology — not the doctrine of the Church but the doctrine of churches and church furnishings — would see such buildings as revealing the character of the God to Whom they were dedicated as well as the purposes of the architect and the heart of the society.

Everyone believes some version of the expression theory now; beauty is not to be had, but there is meaning enough. There is surely something to the theory that art expresses civilization, but its critics, who ask such questions as “How does the sadness get into the music?” have made their points as well. In any event, about 1820, there was suddenly mind in everything. Wordsworth later wrote, “in all form of things there is a mind,” by which he meant not some formality, some pattern, as Aristotle would have had it, but a vital, living mind, more closely akin to Hegel’s world spirit who was wandering across the landscape having meanings. The result is that we attend to critics who tell us that the whirls and splashes signal the artist’s frustration with contemporary culture and that the painting is a critique of contemporary politics. We believe that Munch’s man coming out of the subway entrance does exhibit the despair of the modern age. When Pugin wrote, however, the theory was new, and he made it famous not so much by defending it as by assuming it. Gothic expressed Catholic Christianity.

What Pugin saw in French cathedrals, his original inspiration, was a certain undeniable beauty that had occurred in cultures that seemed to have what the 19th century lacked. In fact, the world was changing in ways Pugin found frightening, and the Middle Ages, and Gothic as imagined, were a convenient foil for the bustling, commercial, increasingly godless England of the 1840’s. What Pugin wanted was a society conceived as communitarian rather than individual, in which the pursuit of holiness and beauty were more important than the pursuit of money, in which art was not alienated from life and work.

Pugin was born in 1812, a child of the postwar prosperity. His father, A.C., had immigrated to England from France and was an architectural delineator who not only published books but owned a school for delineators and architects. In 1835, at age 23, Pugin converted to Catholicism. The next year, he published *Contrasts; or a Parallel Between the Fifteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*.

The argument in *Contrasts* was partly visual. Pugin juxtaposed Ely Place, Holborn, the London house of the bishop of Ely and a truly noble Gothic edifice of 1536, with the modern Ely House of 1836, an uninspiring row house on Dover Street. The Angel Inn in Oxford, a series of connected row houses, was contrasted with the Angel Inn in Grantham, a lovely medieval building with bay widows, an oriel and tracery. In 1530, the residence of last resort for the poor was the monastery, in which the poor were treated with some respect and, when they died, buried with the rites of the Church. The 19th-century English residence for the poor was the workhouse, in which inmates were to labor under discipline until they died, after which their bodies would be sold to medical students. Pugin’s visual masterstroke was his contrast between a Catholic town of 1440 and the same town in 1840. The Catholic town is a forest of

spires set by a winding river. In 1840, the river is obscured by the brewery and the cotton mills.

In 1835, Pugin married for a second time — his first wife had died in childbirth — and moved into St. Marie’s Grange, a house of his own design. By then, he was set up as an architect and was beginning to have clients. *Contrasts* made Pugin famous, earning him enemies as well as admirers. In 1836, he was employed by Charles Barry to provide the Gothic finishes and details for the parliament buildings; what one sees now is mostly Pugin. In 1842, he designed Alton Towers, the country house of the Catholic earl of Shrewsbury, who remained a client and a friend until Pugin’s death in 1852. In Shrewsbury’s company, Pugin swam in Catholic sanguinity. Shrewsbury had given 250 acres of Charnwood forest to the Trappists, so Cistercians were always in the wings, as was Ambrose DeLisle Phillips, a wealthy convert who nourished the illusion of corporate reunion between Catholics and Anglicans by sponsoring, in 1838, the Society for Prayers for the Reunion of Christendom, an effort later condemned at Rome. In the heady atmosphere of this noble optimism, Pugin flourished. His St. Giles, Cheadle, in the town at the edge of Shrewsbury’s estates, is a distinctive masterpiece of proportion, texture, and color. His pen never stopped. In 1841, he published *The True Principles of Christian or Pointed Architecture*; in 1843, *An Apology for the Revival of Christian Architecture in England*; and, in the same year, *The Present State of Ecclesiastical Architecture in England*.



Augustus Pugin

One of his most interesting works was *A Defense of Chancel Screens*. Neoclassicism had no place for chancel screens, and even new Gothic Revival buildings often left them out. Pugin, however, understood the Church’s earlier desire to protect the Christian mysteries from vulgar gaze. Great churches such as Canterbury or King’s College chapel were built with a stone wall between the choir monks and altar and the ordinary worshiper; the *Sanctus* bell announced the most sacred moments in the Mass. Bringing the faithful into close proximity to the altar was a 17th-century Italian movement. Bernini’s San Andrea al Quirinale, Borromini’s San Carlino and San Agnese in the Piazza Navona, and, later, Inigo Jones’ Queen’s Chapel marked this tendency. Pugin detested this arrangement, seeing in it the beginning of the end of that hierarchical ordering of space that had marked the Christian universe since Saint Augustine wrote about form, measure, and order.

Pugin had already adopted the principle that architecture, especially the architecture of religion, expresses itself in church buildings: “There can be little doubt that the religious rites and

ceremonies of these different people had by far the greatest influence in the formation of their various styles of architecture." The corollary was that, if the architecture was judged debased, the religion must be false.

Architecture expresses the heart of the civilization. The architecture of Georgian England was a debased classicism that rose among cotton mills and breweries. It arose out of a set of beliefs (or unbeliefs) rooted in Protestantism or the Renaissance. The cure was the rejection of those wrong beliefs and a return to the ideas of the 13th century by rebuilding the material culture of the Age of Faith and abjuring the classicism that Pugin associated with Protestantism.

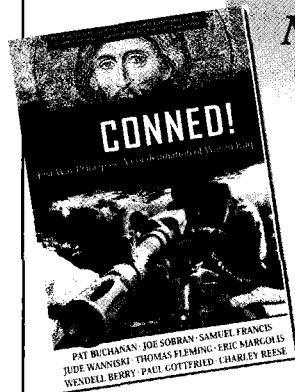
Pugin, and later Ruskin and the Pre-Raphaelites, remained confused about the relationships among the Renaissance, the reprise of classicism, and Protestantism. It is easy to show that Protestantism ended a material culture of monasteries and brought in a culture of workhouses. That the revival of classical architecture was pagan is less easy to show. There was a strain of paganism in Renaissance thought, but the principal purveyors of the new style had hardly been neopagans. Bernini attended Mass every day and communicated twice weekly; Palladio was also famously pious; Michelangelo heard Mass assiduously.

In fact, the path to the classicism that Pugin so disliked was theological and moral: first, the denial that man is to be transformed by grace in this life; second, the rejection of good works; and, third, the attendant focus on getting ahead in this world in a situation in which God has given up its moral government and man has abandoned the pursuit of holiness. Pugin was right that the cause was Protestantism, and that the obvious solution was for everyone to become Catholic. But while being a good reaction-

ary means saying things that are true although they are impossible of realization, being right is not enough, and the expression theory was overdrawn. If living among classical buildings makes one a pagan, then perhaps living among Gothic buildings should make one a Viking. In his short 40 years, Pugin had three wives, fathered seven children, and designed about 200 buildings. He died with a sense of frustration, having written that "My cause as an architect is running out. I have always told you when the tide begins it must run out." His biographer said that Newman, who never accepted the thesis that Gothic meant Catholicism, killed him. Pugin never understood that Newman, who had founded Tractarianism on antiquity, had changed his mind and saw the revival of an outmoded architecture as a dangerous novelty. Pugin was too close to see what he had accomplished.

After Pugin's death, leadership of the Gothic movement passed to his friends in the Cambridge Camden Society, who liked everything about the Middle Ages: architecture, hymns, vestments, church furniture—everything but the heart of the age, Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure and the Mass. John Ruskin, also a great exponent of Gothic, wanted the implied political economy of the Middle Ages but without the Catholic Church, and finally with no church at all. Pugin left a landscape dotted by architectural questions. Cheadle Church stands there, a small place of incomparable beauty. Upon entering, any reflective person will ask, "Where did this come from and why?" If he attempts to answer that question, he will be led back down the same path Pugin followed to ask why the culture of the 13th century created this beauty. Pugin's influence is found also on the main streets of towns in Wisconsin and Texas, where, next Sunday, there will be boys, and perhaps parents, who, bored by the preacher's words, will begin to contemplate pointed windows and tracery. c

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Did the Supreme Court Destroy Property Rights in the *Kelo* Case?

by Stephen B. Presser

In one of the most closely watched cases from the last Supreme Court term, *Kelo v. New London*, the U.S. Supreme Court, by a 5-to-4 majority, ruled that the city of New London could exercise its “eminent domain” power to condemn several private residences in order to raze them as part of an effort to revitalize a downtown area adjacent to a new Pfizer plant. The purpose of this effort was to put these properties to a use supposedly more beneficial to the residents of the city, which had been suffering economic decline, by increasing opportunities for recreation, shopping, and housing—and to increase tax revenues from the urban-renewal project. Most of the property for the project was sold willingly, but several owners of single-family residences, one of which had been in the same family for over a century, resisted. The Fifth Amendment—originally designed to prohibit acts by the federal government but now expanded by somewhat dubious construction to apply against state and local governments—provides that no person may be “deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.” This amendment is the source of the eminent-domain power, which permits the taking by federal, state, or local governments, so long as “just compensation” is paid by the government; but such taking may only be for a “public use.”

The most important question in *Kelo* was whether the city of New London’s aims amounted to “public use.” There is no doubt that the original understanding of that language was to cover situations where the public actually had access to and use of the property in question, including cases, for example, where property had been taken for roads, railroads, bridges, courthouses, and the like. This was the main point made in Justice Thomas’s characteristically excellent dissenting opinion in *Kelo*. In such situations, of course, not only use but ownership could be said to be public, but, in the New London project, much of the property was eventually to be in private hands, to be used for parks, parking, shops, and residences. The public would have access to some, but not all, of this. Viewed in the starkest terms, what the city of New London was up to was a transfer of property from one private party (the displaced homeowners) to other private parties (the commercial developers and, ultimately, new residents). This was justified because, following this development and transfer, New London might be better off financially, and the securing of these potential economic gains was said to be a valid “public purpose.”

There was some Supreme Court language from earlier cas-

es suggesting that “public use” and “public purpose” could be construed as the same thing, although, as Justice Thomas correctly pointed out in his dissent, the original ruling to that effect was “*dicta*”—a conclusion that is not binding on future courts because it was unnecessary to the ruling in the particular case. The case in which “public purpose” was first made the equivalent of “public use,” an opinion by the rather irascible and generally backward looking Rufus Peckham, concerned an irrigation project where there would have been general public access to the water. Nevertheless, building on that case, other Supreme Court decisions had ruled that, as long as “just compensation” was paid, it was all right to take a profitable department store and condemn it as part of a larger project in order to build new housing and remove urban blight, and that it was permissible for the state of Hawaii to take property from large landowners and then sell it to those who had formerly rented the property, in order to spread the benefits of property ownership among a larger group. These had been justified as “public purposes,” although the last seems to have bordered on pure redistribution, and maybe even socialism. Considering these two cases, Justice Stevens concluded for the majority in *Kelo* that New London’s public purposes were no less laudable and could be construed as a “public use.”

In dissent, Justice O’Connor, speaking for herself and Justices Rehnquist, Scalia, and Thomas, pointed out that what the Court had done was essentially to suggest that any government could take the private property of A and give it to B, if it felt that by doing so higher revenues or greater local prosperity might ensue. Her incisive example was that a Motel 6 could be razed and the land turned over to Ritz Carlton, and this would be a valid “public purpose.” She joined Justice Thomas in noting that, if this were constitutional law, then powerful developers and their friendly legislators or politicians might have lower-income residents entirely at their mercy. There is no doubt that the burden of displacement for urban-renewal projects falls disproportionately on the poor, in general, and minorities, in particular, and Justice Thomas reminded us that some have actually (and perhaps correctly) called urban renewal “Negro removal.”

The five justices in the majority (Stevens, Kennedy, Souter, Ginsburg, and Breyer—not normally great friends of federalism) merely followed previous Supreme Court precedent, deferring to state and local governments for their determination of what constitutes a “public purpose.” Slighting protections to private property in the interests of such a liberal goal as urban renewal was consistent with their overall judicial orientation.

One of the primary inclinations of sensible conservatives (indeed, of any sensible American) is to put the protection of private property—particularly, of one’s home—high on the list of the duties of government. Indeed, John Locke, whose thought

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lies behind the Declaration of Independence if not our whole constitutional scheme, believed that governments ought only to be formed to protect the rights of life, liberty, and property, with which we are endowed by God. These three were, for Locke, inalienable rights that preexist government and not boons conferred at the pleasure of temporal sovereigns.

A country in which the people of the states (or their representatives, acting wisely) take more control over their own lives, instead of being controlled by policies spun by nincompoops in black robes, would be a better one than what we have today.

Even the majority in *Kelo* recognized that the pure taking of one person's private property to give to another, even with just compensation, was constitutionally impermissible, and both sides quoted some parts of Justice Samuel Chase's famous statement in *Calder v. Bull* (1798) about the powers of a legislature and private property. This statement is worth examining more closely than either the majority or the dissent did, because it illuminates what is really at stake here. Wrote Chase,

The people of the United States erected their Constitutions, or forms of government, to establish justice, to promote the general welfare, to secure the blessings of liberty; and to protect their persons and property from violence. . . . There are certain vital principles in our free Republican governments, which will determine and over-rule an apparent and flagrant abuse of legislative power; as to authorize manifest injustice by positive law; or to take away that security for personal liberty, or private property, for the protection whereof the government was established. An ACT of the Legislature (for I cannot call it a law) contrary to the great first principles of the social compact, cannot be considered a rightful exercise of legislative authority. . . . A law that punished a citizen for an innocent action, or, in other words, for an act, which, when done, was in violation of no existing law; a law that destroys, or impairs, the lawful private contracts of citizens; a law that makes a man a Judge in his own cause; or a law that takes property from A and gives it to B: It is against all reason and justice, for a people to entrust a Legislature with SUCH powers; and, therefore, it cannot be presumed that they have done it. The genius, the nature, and the spirit, of our State Governments, amount to a prohibition of such acts of legislation; and the general principles of law and reason forbid them. The Legislature . . . cannot change innocence into guilt; or punish innocence as a crime; or violate

the right of an antecedent lawful private contract; or the right of private property. To maintain that our Federal, or State, Legislature possesses such powers, if they had not been expressly restrained; would, in my opinion, be a political heresy, altogether inadmissible in our free republican governments.

This is almost pure Locke, but it makes clear that, for the Framers (Chase was a signer of the Declaration of Independence and one of the most astute constitutional analysts of the late 18th century), the maintenance of private property was dictated by natural law, which no constitution could alter and no legislature could take away, without committing "political heresy," behavior intolerable in "our free republican governments." The giving of A's property to B by the government was one among a very few such prohibited acts. Still, Chase's wonderful encomium in favor of Locke and natural law does not tell us what the law or Constitution ought to provide if a taking is compensated. All Chase actually tells us is that there is a strong presumption that property rights, whatever they are, need to be protected. That strong presumption, of course, might lead one, as it led Justice Thomas, to construe the "public use" language in the Fifth Amendment narrowly, and he is probably correct.

Nevertheless, if we are prepared to concede that the power of eminent domain accompanied by "just compensation" is not interference with Chase's "right of private property," we cannot say that the majority in *Kelo* necessarily got it wrong. What, then, ought to be the extent of private-property rights, and who ought to be in charge of defining them? Given the Supreme Court's recent track record of twisting the meaning of the language of the Constitution in cases involving race, religion, abortion, sex, and a whole host of other topics, we ought to hesitate before answering "the courts," unless we view the role of the judiciary as simply uncovering the "original understanding," as Thomas correctly does.

But Thomas's view remains in the minority on the Court, and, unless George Bush can create a new majority of Supreme Court justices committed to Thomas's school of jurisprudence (as of this writing, it is too early to tell), the Court will continue to follow dubious precedents. Still, the genius of our political system is that the Court is not the sole voice of proper interpretation of the Constitution. Because of the principles of federalism (allocating the basic tasks of government to state and local bodies) and separation of powers (limiting the jurisdiction of the courts and limiting the making of new law to the legislature), there are other means, if we have the courage to employ them, to protect private property.

And here, the signs actually appear to be encouraging. Almost immediately after *Kelo* was handed down, Sen. John Cornyn (R-TX) proposed federal legislation to bar cities and counties from using federal funds for economic-development projects that involve seized property and to prevent the federal government from using its eminent-domain powers in the manner that they were exercised in *Kelo*. Amazingly, Maxine Waters (D-CA), a fiery House member whose ideology is normally 180 degrees from that of Cornyn and other conservatives, has signed on as a cosponsor of the two Republican anti-*Kelo* bills and proposed two of her own. She was quoted as saying that "The people who get hurt are the many poor people and working people who don't think they can fight City Hall." It is probably too much to suggest that a new political coalition

could be emerging over property-rights concerns, but something is going on.

Federal efforts in this area would have only limited effect, but there is even more activity at the state level. On August 3, 2005, Alabama governor Bob Riley signed legislation making his state the first to prohibit cities and counties from using the eminent-domain power for private development or for enhancing tax revenue, although the new law contains a loophole allowing the taking of "blighted" properties for development by private interests. This might be an exception, of course, that swallows the new rule. Nevertheless, the efforts currently under way are impressive. To cite a report from the Institute for Justice (IJ),

In the wake of *Kelo*, legislation has been introduced in seventeen states (Alabama, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Illinois, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Tennessee and Texas) limiting the use of eminent domain for private projects or tightening eminent domain procedures. Lawmakers in another seven states (Alaska, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Ohio, South Dakota, South Carolina and Wisconsin) have announced plans to introduce eminent domain legislation in upcoming sessions. Legislators in Colorado, Georgia and Virginia now hope to revive previously introduced bills.

Legislators in Alabama, California, Florida, New Jersey, Texas and Michigan are mobilizing to support state constitutional amendments prohibiting eminent domain

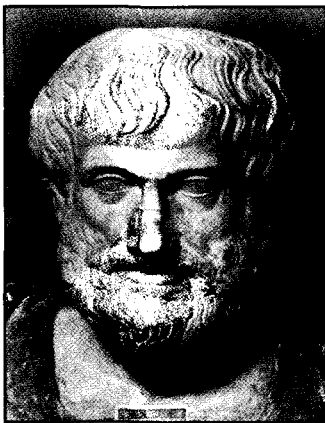
for private development. Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Indiana, Missouri, Tennessee and New Hampshire have created state commissions to study the use of eminent domain and ways of reining in abuse.

As of early August 2005, 27 states were attempting to come up with means of reversing the *Kelo* decision for their people, and, in another significant development reported by the IJ,

Legislators in Connecticut and New York have called for moratoria on the use of eminent domain until their legislatures can revise the law to protect property owners. The City of New London, Conn., has agreed to abide by the moratorium and allow Susette Kelo and the other homeowners to stay for now.

For the time being, at least, the very persons who stood to lose their private property through eminent domain because of the Supreme Court have gotten a reprieve.

It is too early to declare a big win in the war to protect private property and to return jurisprudence to the wisdom of the Framers, but that is clearly the direction in which state law is moving. And, for sensible conservatives who believe that preserving our federalism is perhaps second only to the preservation of private property itself, this is no small achievement. A country in which the people of the states (or their representatives, acting wisely) take more control over their own lives, instead of being controlled by policies spun by nine ephors in black robes, would be a better one than what we have today. It would be delightful if *Kelo* turned out to be not a defeat for property rights but a great victory for states' rights.



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Truth of Blood and Time

by Scott P. Richert

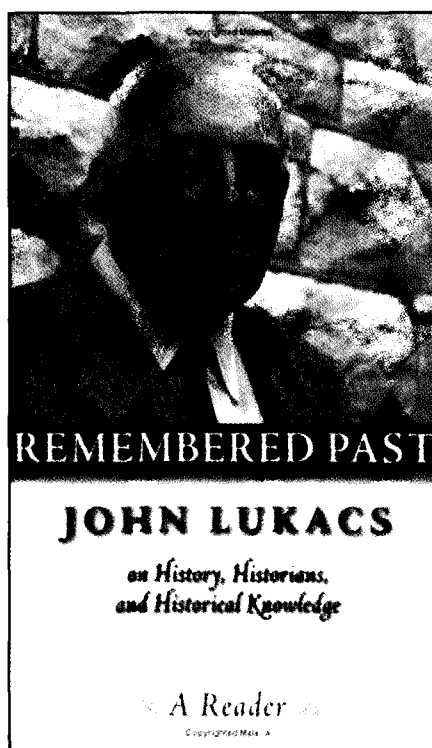
*Here's my wisdom for your use, as I learned it when the moose
And the reindeer roamed where Paris roars to-night: —
There are nine and sixty ways of constructing tribal lays,
And—every—single—one—of—them—is—right!
—Rudyard Kipling, "In the Neolithic Age"*

**Remembered Past: John Lukacs
on History, Historians, and
Historical Knowledge**
by John Lukacs
Wilmington, Delaware: ISI Books;
922 pp., \$18.00

When I was a college student in the late 1980's, the obsession of conservative activists in academia was summed up in the buzzword *relativism*. By the early 90's, that term had been paired with *nihilism*, understood to be relativism's darker and more foreboding big brother. Come to believe that the expression of truth is affected in any way by time, by place, by civilization, and you would eventually wind up believing that there is no basis for morality. And those influenced by the disciples of Leo Strauss (or those who had simply glanced at a copy of Allan Bloom's *Closing of the American Mind*) often threw a third term—*historicism*—into the mix. There is truth and falsehood; philosophy and history; white and black—and anyone who suggests that human life is characterized by shades of gray secretly yearns for Auschwitz and the Gulag.

The "success" of conservatism politically in the 1980's undoubtedly had much to do with such a simplistic view

Scott P. Richert is the executive editor of *Chronicles*.



of reality. While most conservative students and professors still knew the name Edmund Burke and recalled that a prominent conservative thinker named Russell Kirk had declared him the father of modern conservatism (something that cannot be said today), their political hero, Ronald Reagan, cited Burke's great opponent, Thomas Paine, more often than he did any other political thinker. Paine—a radical rabble-rouser, a moral dissolute, and a rabid supporter of the French Revolution—ultimately ended his life as a man without a country and, thus, is a fitting hero for the neoconservatives who, by 1986, had taken full control of the Reagan administration.

Paine foreshadowed the neocons also in his rejection of history, and his adoption by American "conservatives"

shows how incorrectly they lay claim to that term:

Even though the political meaning of "liberal" came in the 1820s, the liberal vision of the world came from the eighteenth century. That vision was *the* dominant vision of the modern age: the vision that society was perfectible, that there was no such thing as original sin, that it was within the power of man . . . to transform the world: a vision which . . . was essentially anti-historical, or at least ahistorical. Against it arose the recognition of history by a thinker such as Burke, who was not behind but ahead of Paine . . . For Burke was not merely a defender of tradition: he recognized and expressed the inevitability of the historical dimension of human nature, something that not many Americans were willing to accept.

Thus writes John Lukacs in "The Problem of American Conservatism," a chapter of his important 1984 work, *Outgrowing Democracy: A History of the United States in the Twentieth Century* (recently released in a revised edition by Yale University Press as *A New Republic*). This chapter is one of 67 articles, reviews, excerpts from books, and, in one case, a whole book included in *Remembered Past: John Lukacs on History, Historians,*

and Historical Knowledge.

In a delicious bit of irony, the Intercollegiate Studies Institute, whose publications *Intercollegiate Review* and *Campus* often featured those doomsayers of relativism and nihilism and historicism, published this massive reader, which also includes the most complete bibliography of Professor Lukacs's writings ever assembled. The irony, of course, comes from the fact that John Lukacs, though a self-described reactionary whose political and philosophical views expose American "conservatives," by contrast, for the liberals they are, has been repeatedly attacked by such "conservatives" as a "relativist" and an "historicist." Still, ISI has never joined in those attacks (indeed, Lukacs has long served on the editorial board of ISI's flagship publication, *Modern Age*), and the publication of this volume makes it clear that the politically oriented articles in *Campus* and *Intercollegiate Review* did not express the whole range of thinking at ISI.

Editors Jeffrey O. Nelson and Mark G. Malvasi have, on the whole, shown very good judgment in their selection of pieces for inclusion in this reader, which they have divided into six sections: "The Problem of Historical Knowledge," "Historians Reviewed," "Dissenting Opinions (Or: A Few Other Prosaists)," "Places and Times," "Some Twentieth-Century Questions," and "Reading, Writing, and Teaching History." Still, the 67 selections, while making for a volume of 950-plus pages, barely begin to scratch the surface of Professor Lukacs's body of work, which now extends over 60 years. And thus the highlight of this volume, both for admirers of Professor Lukacs's work and for those who are being exposed to it for the first time, should be the 48-page bibliography of his published writings, compiled by his granddaughter Helen. Based on his own collection of clippings, even this bibliography, she warns, is only about 95 to 98 percent complete, and it does not contain publications from before his emigration from Hungary or after December 31, 2003. Even so, it is the most complete account available of the phenomenal output of one of the most important, and yet consistently underrated or ignored, historians of the 20th century.

All of the themes that Professor Lukacs has developed over the years are found in this reader: the difference between an historical philosophy and a philosophy of history; the important distinction be-

tween motives and purposes ("Motives come from the past; purposes involve the pull of the future"); how what people think is often very different from what they think they think; why "facts" are not the same as truths:

Their statements or expressions can come close to truths—which is the best we can expect. A "fact" is never absolute. Nor is it given to us to fix, to nail down, to state unalterably an absolute truth. We may think that our *concept* (or *idea*) of truth is absolute; yet that, too, only hearkens toward the absolute. (Our very language reflects this: "This is true" is not quite the same as: "This is *the* truth.")

All of this reflects Lukacs's understanding of the creative role of imagination (a faculty of which memory is part and parcel) and his recognition of the false dichotomy between subject and object (a point on which he was strongly influenced by the English linguist Owen Barfield, whose book *Saving the Appearances* rivals Lukacs's *Historical Consciousness* in its exposition of an historical philosophy). As Lukacs writes, "Historical thinking accords with the recognition that human knowledge is neither objective nor subjective but personal and participant." And again:

The recognition of the objectivist illusion does not reduce, it rather enhances, the general validity of personal knowledge. . . . If . . . by historical "relativity" we mean not only the historicity of every form of human cognition but also of every form of human expression, it should be obvious that this idea of relativity is neither a feeble nor a senseless one; for this "relativity" of *truths* means not the absence but the potential richness, not the nullity but the multiplicity of *truth*.

It is for passages such as this that Lukacs has been attacked as a relativist in the sense that I have discussed above—even by recent reviewers of this volume, which provides ample evidence to the contrary. Acknowledging the multiplicity of truth is not the same as claiming that truth is a merely human creation; after all, Christians believe (or at least used to believe) that the ultimate Truth Himself is a multiplicity in unity. It is only to those who

have lost that belief (or perhaps never had it) that Lukacs's assertion can appear a denial of truth.

In case any doubt remains, however, here is Lukacs in "The Presence of Historical Thinking" (a chapter reprinted here from his 2002 book *At the End of an Age* and the very first selection in this volume):

But the historicity of our seeing and speaking does *not* amount to the relativity of truth. What history gives a mind, at best, is not a dose of relativism; it gives us certain standards, the power to contrast, and the right to estimate. The belief that truth is relative is no longer the assertion merely of cynics or skeptics but of postmodern philosophers, according to whom there were and are no truths, only modes of discourse, structures of thought and of text. Their relativization of truth is absolute. And yet: truths exist. Their existence, unlike the existence of ideas, is not a matter of our choice. But we are responsible for how, and where, and why, and when we try to express them.

Here, we see a manifestation of Lukacs's persistent (and Catholic) belief in free will. Throughout his work, he attacks the subjectivist determinist idea that men's actions are somehow the result of their history or circumstances, rather than their own moral choices. To the ideologues and systematizers, he constantly repeats the refrain that "What matters is not what ideas do to men but what men do to their ideas; how and when they choose them, and how and why they accommodate them to their own wishes, interests, lives, circumstances." The same questions can be asked of the crass materialists of left and right, the Marxists and the free-market economists who argue that human behavior is bound by economic "laws" that represent a monolithic "truth" that, rather than setting man free, binds his will.

Perhaps nowhere is Lukacs's disdain for simplistic idealism more evident than in his withering review of Francis Fukuyama's *The End of History and the Last Man*, reprinted here from the December 1992 issue of *Chronicles*. One paragraph alone is worth the ridiculously low price of this book:

Owing to lack of space, but also be-

cause history (and human nature) do not follow the laws of physics—meaning that while it is easier to wrestle with a weak body than with a strong one, it is more difficult to wrestle with a weak mind than with a strong one—in this review I must let Fukuyama speak for himself. Fukuyama has given his chapters such titles as “The Weakness of Strong States II, or, Eating Pineapples on the Moon,” and “The Victory of the VCR.” In his introduction, he writes, “In lieu of conventional thanks to a typist for helping to prepare the manuscript, I should perhaps acknowledge the work of the designers of the Intel 80386 microprocessor.” He should. It shows.

Thirteen years later, Fukuyama’s end of history lies in the ruins of the cradle of civilization, while nationalism—the defining phenomenon of the history of the 20th century, which Fukuyama did not even acknowledge (much less address) but to which Lukacs has devoted much of his attention throughout his career—continues to shock and awe.

Though it limited the amount of out-of-print material that could be included in the volume, Nelson’s and Malvasi’s decision to include chapters of books that are still in print or widely available (such as *Historical Consciousness* and *Outgrowing Democracy*) is understandable, since this reader is an attempt to introduce the thought of Professor Lukacs to new audiences as well as to collect important pieces for the convenience of those already familiar with his work. In one case, however, I think that their institutional affiliation has clouded their judgment, and that is their decision to include the entire text of *A Student’s Guide to the Study of History*, a concise pamphlet that ISI published in 2000 as part of their very successful and generally well-prepared series of student’s guides to different subject areas. I have no complaint about the book; indeed, I think it is one of the best of the series and have recommended it both to college students and, most recently, to an 80-year-old man who was looking for some help in focusing his study of history in his twilight years. It adds little to this volume, however, while using up 19 precious pages that might have been better put to use. Two articles that I would

have liked to see in its place (and readers may be forgiven if they assume that, here, I am revealing my own institutional loyalty) are “To Hell With Culture” and its sequel, “To Hell With College,” published in the September 1994 and September 1997 issues of *Chronicles*. In them, Professor Lukacs makes a very forceful case that both culture (as commonly understood to include literature, art, etc.) and higher education are largely the products of civilization, not the other way around. As he writes in the first of the essays:

Whether in an inner-city school or at Harvard, the young are not taught civilization. . . . I mean a respect for life, for an orderly life that is inseparable not only from a respect for learning but from a respect for one’s provenance, for language, and for the ability to read, write, and listen. Almost half of our young now spend nearly 20 years in schools, with the result that most of them cannot read and write and express themselves adequately.

As we enter the 21st century, it is civilization itself (the end of history notwithstanding) that is in danger of destruction.

Should government promote “culture” at all? That is at least arguable. What is not arguable is that government must protect civilization. When it fails to do so, government, as we know it, dissolves, with first anarchy and then barbaric tyranny succeeding it.

While some might argue that the dissolution of our current government would be preferable to its continuation (and even more of us might wistfully entertain that idea), Lukacs points out their mis-

take. The corruption on display in high places is only a reflection of the corruption of an increasingly uncivilized people, and an uncivilized people will never be free, no matter what their form of government.

Civilization arose when man became aware of his past and thus became conscious of himself as an historical creature, as more than a mere animal. It progressed as that historical consciousness deepened, particularly in the wake of the Incarnation, when it became clear (to those who have eyes to see) that history and tradition reveal truths—including the Truth of God Himself—that could not be accessed otherwise.

And yet:

Nearly four hundred years ago Descartes argued, in his *Discourse on Method*, that the study of history was wasteful because we cannot acquire any accurate or certain knowledge of the human past, as we can of mathematics and of the world of nature.

The historical lesson of the modern age that Descartes helped usher in is that civilization—indeed, human life itself—is threatened whenever we begin to separate ourselves from our history, to erase our memory, to believe that there is no such thing as truth or—perhaps even worse—to believe that truth is universal in the Enlightenment sense: abstract, radically monolithic, not of this world of flesh and blood and time.

As another great historical philosopher who emigrated to America once wrote, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it”—and they do so because they have become lesser men. Thankfully, those who still understand that civilization has always depended upon those who *do* remember the past have Professor Lukacs, and now this splendid volume, as a guide. —C

“American History: The Terminological Problem”

“In this sense national socialism survived Hitler. Every state in the world has become a welfare state. Whether they call themselves socialist or not does not matter much. Of course the proportions of the compound of nationalism and socialism vary from country to country; but the compound is there . . . Elsewhere, nationalism and socialism were brought together, reconciled and compounded, without violence and hatred and war. . . . We are all national socialists now.”

—John Lukacs

The Cataclysm That Happened

by Thomas Fleming

The Fall of Rome and the End of Civilization

by Bryan Ward-Perkins

Oxford: Oxford University Press;
351 pp., \$28.00



Why did the Roman Empire in the West fall apart in the fifth century? The argument started even before Odovacar forced the German puppet Romulus Augustulus, whimpering, off the stage in 476. When, in 410, Alaric and his Visigoths sacked Rome, old-fashioned pagans immediately blamed Christianity and the neglect of the old rituals for the catastrophe. Gibbon gave the pagan interpretation new life about the time of the American Revolution, and academic pagans ever since have either publicly or secretly endorsed at least part of his interpretation. Christianity, they whisper, is an Asian superstition that corrupted a healthy society. (What they are afraid to say but really mean is the equally false belief that Christianity is a Jewish cult.)

Christians were equally appalled by barbarian violence. The empire, so they believed, represented a natural and divine political order that had been corrupted by paganism. Purified since Constantine's time, the empire was now a bulwark of the Church. What did it mean when a horde of hoodlum savages could invade and sack the Eternal City?

In response to the sack, Saint Jerome lamented, "The human race is included in the ruins," and a shocked Saint Augustine wrote his masterpiece, *The City of God*. In what became one of the most influential Christian books of all time, Augustine explained that Christians, in abandoning the pagan gods, had not caused the destruction of Rome. Rome, the city (or commonwealth) of man, had been flawed and sinful. In turning away from the truth and toward idolatry, the city of man (Rome) had condemned itself by its criminal misdeeds.

Augustine was never one for moderation. Whatever argument he was making, usually in opposition to heretics or pagans, he pushed to the extreme. He could appear to advocate both free will

and predestination with equal gusto, and, in combating the pagan remnant, he seemed to forget all that he owed to Cicero and Vergil (to say nothing of his selective and rosy reading of Old Testament crimes, by comparison with which Rome's legendary acts of violence absolutely pale). It has been comforting, however, to many Christians, to convince themselves that the Romans got what they deserved and, to the descendants of barbarians, to believe that the infusion of fresh Germanic blood into the aging empire was basically a good thing.

In recent years, this argument has been refined by historians such as Peter Brown and Walter Goffart, who emphasize the gradualness of the transition from late antiquity to the early Middle Ages. As Goffart puts it in "a memorable sound bite" (as Bryan Ward-Perkins says), "What we call the Fall of the Western Roman empire was an imaginative experiment that got a little out of hand." Of course, there is some merit to an analysis that illuminates some of the virtues of the early Middle Ages, and equally, historians are all too prone to divide the world up into neat compartments among which there is no communication. Having conceded this much, I have to say that Ward-Perkins' little study comes like spring rain on what is becoming a parched desert of late-imperial studies.

Anyone with a clear head might have written the parts of *The Fall of Rome* that are based on documentary and literary studies. Anyone who has, with an open mind, read Gregory of Tours' *History of the Franks* or Paul the Deacon's *History of the Lombards* has confronted a period of appalling nastiness. It took roughly four to five centuries before Frankish kings could submit to the most ordinary rules of decency. (I take Pope Nicholas' success in preventing Lothar II from divorcing his wife to marry his mistress as a convenient symbolic episode.) And these chronicles of Frankish and Lombard violence are matched and exceeded by countless contemporary documents. Ward-Perkins has gone through some of the more stunning and cautiously evaluated their validity without taking every hysterical jotting as unvarnished truth. Unlike too many scholars, he does not pick and choose the most extreme cases, give them the most extreme interpretation, and then take that interpretation for a norm.

It is in his analysis of the material culture that Ward-Perkins excels. The son of a well-known Roman archaeologist,

he grew up in Rome, and the fruits of his own research on this period can be read in his superb volume *From Classical Antiquity to the Middle Ages: Public Buildings in Northern and Central Italy, AD 300-850*. The author's detailed studies show a massive economic and technological decline: Roof tiles are no longer made; decent bourgeois pottery turned on the wheel is replaced by crude and brittle handmade junk unworthy of Dark Age Greece; stone buildings virtually disappear; standards of hygiene collapse; a thriving international economy based on specialized skills and money decays into a system of local barter for poorly made junk.

How did this happen, and why in the West rather than in the East? Ward-Perkins' answer is that the West entered a vicious cycle in which massive barbarian raids disrupted the Roman bureaucracy and disturbed the collection of taxes that made the huge Roman military establishment possible. The East got a few lucky breaks: The barbarian pressure was somewhat stronger in the West; the East was saved several times by vigorous leaders; the ancient Eastern economy was more robust; and the Eastern capital, Constantinople, was built on a more defensible location than Rome or Ravenna.

Whatever the causes, the West did succumb to barbarian invaders, and, for most civilized people, a terrible nightmare began. There were bright spots, such as the papacy of Gregory the Great at the end of the sixth century or the false dawn of the Carolingian Renaissance that began 200 years later. Our wild ancestors were eventually captivated by the Church they had previously plundered and, under Byzantine influence and with the inspiration of Roman ruins, the arts of sculpture, painting, and architecture recovered as part of the civilization of the High Middle Ages, whose brilliance we can only admire without hoping to emulate. But, even in the 12th century, much of the people—our people—were little better than pious savages, whose level of health and length of life was vastly exceeded by provincials living in the late empire.

The Fall of Rome, though written in a lively polemical style, might have benefited from a more severe editing; some of the later parts seem more than a little repetitive. Nonetheless, it is a book that is as entertaining to read as it is terrifying to consider. Glib generalizations about gradual transition or "fresh blood in a

decadent Empire” are an insult to the decent people of the fifth and sixth centuries, and they encourage us to adopt a Pollyannish attitude to the growing barbarity of our own day.

Make no mistake about it: Things can always get worse. We Americans could, indeed, afford to eat less bad food and live in houses less vast and tasteless than we do; we might even do without petroleum or electricity or open-heart surgery, but, in our own time, the rule of law, coherent prose, handsome public architecture, and melodious verse are disappearing, along with monogamous marriage and good manners, as rapidly as they disappeared in northern Gaul under the Franks. We spent the 20th century destroying all the cultural institutions that elevated us above our apish barbarian ancestors, and our children, if we do nothing, will live in a world that more resembles the world of Alboin and Chilperich than the world of Thomas and Dante.

Thomas Fleming is the author, most recently, of The Morality of Everyday Life.

Suffering Narratives

by Jack Trotter

One Nation Under Therapy: How the Helping Culture Is Eroding Self-Reliance

by Christina Hoff Sommers
and Sally Satel

New York: St. Martin's Press;
310 pp., \$23.95



On September 14, as horrifying images broadcast from New Orleans dominated the nation's headlines, *USA Today*, citing as its source Charles Currie, head of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services, reported that as many as a quarter of the Hurricane Katrina “evacuees” would fall victim to Post Traumatic-Stress Disorder (PTSD) and require long-term professional care. Thus, as many as 250,000 of the approximately one million people displaced by Katrina are walking disasters waiting to happen all over again. At some point in the coming months, according to the current wisdom of the mental-health establishment, these people will begin

to reexperience the frightening events that led to their displacement: recurring nightmares, crippling phobias, and anxiety more intense than the feelings generated by the original experience. In short, they will add their numbers to the ranks of the millions of Americans who, since 1980, have been diagnosed with PTSD, a mental disease whose taxonomic history is suspect, to say the least.

According to Christina Hoff Sommers and Sally Satel, authors of *One Nation Under Therapy*, PTSD's inclusion as a taxonomic category in the 1980 edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* of the American Psychiatric Association (APA) was, in large part, the result of a long campaign on the part of Vietnam veterans and their advocates. At the forefront of the campaign in the early 1970's were psychiatrists and antiwar activists Robert Jay Lifton and Chaim Shatan, who were convinced that prolonged trauma of a pathological nature should be understood as the *normal* response of veterans—not only of those who had experienced combat duty but of those who had served in Vietnam in virtually any capacity. They argued that hundreds of thousands of homecoming veterans—alienated, self-destructive, and angry at having been used as pawns in an unjust war—were victims of something they called the “Post-Vietnam Syndrome.” Lifton and Shatan tirelessly trumpeted this message at every available opportunity: at political rallies, at war-crimes hearings, in the media, and, above all, within the psychiatric profession.

The APA began revising its diagnostic manual in 1974 but eventually rejected the Lifton-Shatan notion of a “Post-Vietnam Syndrome” in favor of a broader classification. The diagnostic scope of the PTSD taxonomy established in 1980 included not just the casualties of war, but a variety of victims or survivors of “natural disasters, severe accidents, and . . . concentration camps.” Critics of the new classification argued that many of the symptoms listed—“recurrent images, avoidance, guilt, jumpiness, irritability”—were not at all distinctive and “could be subsumed under variants of existing disorders such as depression or anxiety.”

These early warnings proved to be all too germane. Soon, all kinds of advocacy groups saw the political and social benefits that might be reaped from the new taxonomy. Feminists, for example, recognized that PTSD “created a diagnostic niche for victims of rape, domestic vi-

olence, child abuse, and sexual assault.” Moreover, the APA exacerbated the problem when, in 1994, it redefined PTSD, modifying the “range of events that could count as ‘traumatic’ . . . to include hearing about the unexpected death of a loved one” or being diagnosed with a fatal disease. Indeed, so flexible was the revised definition that one no longer need be the actual victim of a disaster or severe accident; merely witnessing such occurrences might in some cases qualify one for a PTSD diagnosis. More recently, a group of Boston therapists has been lobbying for the recognition of something they call, in all seriousness, “Post Traumatic Slavery Disorder,” a diagnostic atrocity that would explain the disfunctionality of underclass black families as a legacy of slavery. Clearly, as Sommers and Satel imply, the trivializing of “trauma” in the name of therapeutic progress is tending toward a *reductio ad absurdum*, and they are surely not far off the mark when they claim that PTSD has become an almost archetypal “cultural narrative for suffering” in America today.

The problem with defining trauma as the normal response to life's adversities, and thus medicalizing that response, is that it is morally debilitating. As trauma victims, we are no longer responsible; we become patients rather than the agents of our own healing; we are no longer self-reliant but, increasingly, self-obsessed. Early in *One Nation Under Therapy*, Sommers and Satel define “therapism”—an ugly but useful term—as an attitude typified by “openness, emotional self-absorption, and the sharing of feelings.” Additionally, therapism assumes that “vulnerability, rather than strength, characterizes the American psyche,” and, as a result, we require an army of “therapists, self-esteem educators, grief counselors, healers and traumatologists” to guide us toward genuine mental health. That the authors do not countenance such assumptions is evident on nearly every page of their book. In six lucid and thoroughly documented chapters, they call into question the myth of the fragile child, the self-esteem movement, the secularizing of sin and guilt as “syndrome,” the cancerous spread of “emotional correctness,” and more. In every case, they chart the disturbing rise, since the 1970's, of a massive and intrusive therapeutic culture in a society that until recently prided itself on its deep reservoirs of self-reliance.

Problems arise, however, in the authors' failure to explain how it is that a

nation of rugged individualists could so rapidly be transformed into a nation of whiners and dependents. At one point, they draw upon the analysis of Boston College political-science professor Alan Wolfe, who notes that Americans have always lacked a "tragic sense of life" and that their historically easy optimism has rendered them helpless against the morally dubious claims of the "nonjudgmentalism" that is a cornerstone of therapism. Considering that the one section of the country that *does* preserve a tragic sense of life, the South, has also been at least marginally more resistant to the therapeutic culture, there may be something to Wolfe's reflections. Sommers and Satel imply that the growth of secularism may also be a factor in explaining why Americans from every socioeconomic background have embraced therapism, especially as secularism erodes the capacity for moral judgment and responsibility and undermines the traditional understanding that the endurance of suffering and pain can lead to spiritual and moral maturity. This explanation is no doubt true enough as far as it goes. However, it fails to answer some questions.

Perhaps it is no coincidence that the authors are resident scholars at the American Enterprise Institute, for, in typically neoconservative fashion, they studiously overlook some important political and economic factors in explaining this unfortunate transformation of the American character. If the moral resistance of Americans to the blandishments of the therapeutic society has been dangerously eroded, it may be in large part because Americans are increasingly atomized, uprooted from traditional communities based on networks of kinship and economic interdependence. Americans may once have been a nation of rugged individualists, but they were individualists whose self-reliance grew out of self-reliant and self-sustaining communities. The destruction of those communities began as early as the Civil War but proceeded apace with the creation of the vast state-sponsored bureaucracies of the Roosevelt era. By the 1970's, the collusion of an ever-expanding central state and a corporate capitalism intent upon reducing us all to the status of passive consumers had produced a nation of individuals ripe for therapeutic "intervention." The rise of therapism is simply the latest phase in the evolution of the consumerist society—*i.e.*, a quasitotalitarian society of vacuous "selves" incapable of

self-government and, therefore, no longer any threat to the Moloch state that has devoured them. As the late Robert Nisbet notes in his much-neglected book *The Quest for Community*, "Totalitarianism is . . . made possible only through the obliteration of all the intermediate layers of value and association that commonly nourish personality and serve to protect it from external power." It is unfortunate, but not surprising, that, while the authors of *One Nation Under Therapy* brilliantly trace the growth of therapism in the psychiatric profession and in the culture at large, they are virtually silent about the role played in that development by agencies of the "compassionate" state such as Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services (handmaid of the Department of Health and Human Services), whose motto is "a life in the community for everyone."

Jack Trotter writes from Charleston, South Carolina.

Roll On, Beethoven

by James O. Tate

Beethoven: The Universal Composer
by Edmund Morris
New York: HarperCollins Publishers;
256 pp., \$21.95



The fate of the famous in this post-modern and even campy time is problematical. The multicultural agenda is not considerate of the distinguished or of distinctions, and "diversity" imposes quotas on what we may be permitted to admire, to enjoy, or even to know. What's more, "the melting of forms" characteristic of the 20th century can hardly play to the benefit of one who was so formally obsessed as Ludwig van Beethoven was. These are only some of the reasons why a topic seemingly so obvious as Beethoven is not so obvious, after all.

And there *are* other reasons. The trivialization of greatness through overfamiliarity and through the mass production that creates a mass culture leads not only to condescension but to contempt and resentment. Charles Schulz's comic-strip character Schroeder, who idolized Beethoven and played him on a toy piano, was a figure not so much of hopeless

admiration as of befuddlement before the heroic and embarrassment before the sublime. Words such as *universal* and even *composer* are today contested sites. A cultured lady trained in ballet, and whose sister is a violinist, told me the other day that she listens to hip-hop, because classical music is strictly for elevators. Yes, dignity is hard to maintain when your image adorns sweatshirts.

Dignity is also hard to maintain when everyone thinks, thanks to potted history, that he knows your life story. Bad Beethoven! You yelled at your servants; you didn't pick up after yourself; you cheated your publishers; you left the reeking chamber pot under your piano; you didn't get the girls; you freaked out about your nephew Karl; and generally you were just *bad*—a model for sulky teenagers who all think they are inspired and full of feelings.

On the other hand, this bad Beethoven was dealt some bad cards: nearly a lifetime of ill health, topped off by a stroke of fated cruelty—deafness. The legend of Beethoven is not strictly musical, for his struggle to accept and overcome his deafness is a great story of human courage and creativity, and yet that story is subsumed in the even greater story of musical courage and creativity. And we would have to agree with Edmund Morris that the musical story is the most imposing one we know. Beethoven is the greatest of composers, and has not rolled over, Chuck Berry's admonition notwithstanding.

Edmund Morris has not rolled over, either, but what else would you expect from the biographer of Teddy Roosevelt? Synthesizing the work of Alexander Wheelock Thayer in the 19th century and Maynard Solomon in the 20th, as well as much other recent biographical and musical scholarship, Morris has produced an economical work that covers all the ground, including the ground of Beethoven's greatness, and he has done so stylishly and dramatically: Beethoven's life bristles with the tension between art and mere existence. He never flinches from the bad Beethoven of paranoid fits, challenged ethics, and crazed obsessions, as with his nephew. He insists that there is no evidence of improprieties having occurred between Ludwig and Karl (a consideration necessitated by the imperium that requires a sodomitic sanction for cultural achievement). He insists on the importance of the early works as well as those of the middle period, and these overplayed works he rescues from routine. He in-

sists on the visionary and transcendental qualities of Beethoven's late works and reminds us that the composer was not a romantic, even though we hear through the romantic reception that enshrined the legend. The Beethoven who wrote the last five piano sonatas, the *Diabelli Variations*, the late quartets, the *Missa Solemnis*, and the Ninth Symphony wrote for the future, and even for the 20th century. Late in that century, in a post-modern *tour de force*, *Gravity's Rainbow*, Thomas Pynchon rebuked Beethoven for lacking both a sense of humor and the freedom of jazz that was supposed to liberate us from systems but failed to get the job done, after all. In fact, the allegation that Beethoven had no humor is an absurd charge indicating ignorance of many texts, while boogie-woogie, and even rock music, are implied at the end of the *Appassionata* Sonata. Beethoven has no more been forgiven for being the first great modern artist than he has been forgiven for knowing his own worth. He claimed the *Quartet in C sharp minor*, Op. 131, to be his most perfect composition, and he ought to have known. But he refused an opus number to the *Thirty-two Variations in C minor* because he resented the success of his own piece—he had out-Beethovened even himself! We must therefore rejoice that he wrote the meretricious *Wellington's Victory*, for, in such an exposure of fallibility, he did us and himself a favor.

The only modern musician I recall Morris citing is the late Carlos Kleiber, for his recording of the Fifth Symphony with the Wiener Philharmoniker, an admirable piece of work. Yet I do wish that Morris had said something on the subject of access to Beethoven for those who are not themselves musicians. Ordinary performances of Beethoven are better than none at all, I suppose, but we now have a century of recorded Beethoven to consider, during which revolutions in performance practice have occurred. There are examples of 19th-century standards on record from pianists, violinists, and conductors who grew up in the atmosphere that created what we call "Beethoven," as well as a plethora of performances from modern times.

And that matters, for Beethoven is not finished with us, because we are not finished with him. The most vital reason we still listen to him, in spite of all post-modern resentments, is that he has something that we need: a human achievement, and a musical one, and both of

them are grand. I hear a lot said today about "creativity" and "culture," but I see and hear precious little embodiment of those abstractions. When we encounter Beethoven, however, there is no lack. No wonder the postmodern mentality can only regard him as a reproach. And no wonder that, in masterpieces of the modern era, such as Forster's *Howards End*, Eliot's *Four Quartets*, and Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange*, Beethoven is the image of the redemptive power of art.

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Tremendous Twaddle

by Derek Turner

Political Correctness and the Theoretical Struggle

by Frank Ellis

Auckland: Maxim Institute;
86 pp., NZ\$19.95



There was a time, not long ago, when Britons just laughed at political correctness, seeing it as a Californian cult that no one with any common sense could ever take seriously. Even now, one comes across Conservative politicians who will say that such and such a news story is evidence of "political correctness gone mad"—as if it had ever been anything else. With such half-humorous, half-exasperated responses, they promptly forget about the subject and concentrate on more immediate matters—only to wheel out the same superannuated, complacent phraseology the next time the matter arises.

What such politicians do not realize is that, while they have been concentrating on their various budget deficits, school-financing schemes, the opening and closing of local hospitals, cuts in defense spending, streetlights in the constituency, why the shape of bananas has to conform to E.U. "guidelines," and whether they will be promoted in the next reshuffle, the civilization they take so much for granted is being eaten away from under their feet. Britain is being rapidly de-Britainized, and they have scarcely no-

ticed. While they have pontificated on the peripheral and plotted their progress up the career ladder, semantic termites have been gnawing away at the West's linguistic and cultural assumptions, to the extent that the West is in danger of fragmenting entirely under the combined assault of myriad voracious jaws. While we were all chuckling at "personholes" and "waitrons," pale-eyed zealots tightened their grip on the town halls of Islington and Sheffield and Glasgow and grasped the machinery of state.

All of our countries, to a greater or lesser extent, are now submerged under a tsunami of increasingly loaded language that, as Ellis puts it, is "not primarily used to communicate ideas but rather to signal the speaker's willingness to submit to the politically correct register." This flood of foolishness is lent impetus by a dualistic mentality that, in effect, insists that "you are with us or against us— and if against us, you are evil and must be crushed."

As a result, expressing any idea about any subject is increasingly fraught with danger—danger of signaling that the speaker is "insensitive" or actually inhuman; danger of "offending" one or another multifarious minority; danger of social ostracism; danger of professional repercussions; danger, even, of legal penalties. "Correct thinking," Ellis points out, eventually means "no thinking at all." This "anti-thought" is certainly no laughing matter and allows nothing for British (or American) conservatives to feel superior about; if anything, political correctness is further advanced in our countries than elsewhere in the West. We now scarcely even notice as autocue readers utter such inanities as "firefighters" or "fishers," as politicians demand sex- or race-specific quotas, or as we are corporately denounced for our "racism," "sexism," and "homophobia." Anyone who cleaves to unfashionable views, or unthinkingly accepts the "wisdom of the ages," is becoming a dissident by default.

This is the great drawback of that "pragmatism" of which conservative Britons are so bootlessly proud, and of taking no interest in ideology. Faced with an ideological assault, it is not enough to rely on healthy instinct or bluff refusal to engage. Healthy instinct can easily become diseased reflex, while isolated redoubts can easily be bypassed for later slighting. A global vision must be matched by a rival global vision, an ideology by a counterideology, a disciplined foe by a dis-

ciplined defense—or else, eventually, “pragmatism” becomes a fluid accommodation to an ever more sinister *status quo*. The conservative establishment in Britain—and everywhere else—has, in general, been unequal to the task of holding the Occidental line against the forces of massed cretinism. It has fallen back in disarray all along the front and ceded key strongholds—while trumpeting about economic “triumph” and the downfall of communism, like British troops in France in 1940 singing, “We’re going to hang out the washing on the Siegfried Line,” as they were being rolled back to Dunkirk.

There have always been honorable exceptions to this Blimpish rule—although the holdouts are almost always to be found firing their counter-counter-cultural broadsides from the pages of the *Daily Mail* instead of from the Conservative Central Office. Yet even within this audacious rear guard, there is a lack of knowledge about the true origins of the p.c. cult and even a creeping acceptance of p.c. “logic.” These commentators will probably be vaguely aware that political correctness has Bolshevik origins. Yet, amazingly, *no* previous studies have considered the connection between Maoist notions of correctness and higher education in America. No one else has gone to the trouble of investigating the links to give us, as Frank Ellis does in his book, a unified field theory of this fad, a time line of this tremendous twaddle.

Ellis is, in certain ways, uniquely qualified for his self-imposed task. Fluent in both Russian and German, a widely recognized authority on the communist era and all things Russian (he is lecturer in Russian and Slavonic studies at the University of Leeds and has just completed a book on Soviet war propaganda), Ellis is also uncompromisingly committed to Western values, as was demonstrated some years ago, when he refused to bow to media and university pressure not to speak at an *American Renaissance* conference in the United States. He has long since realized that, as he says in this book, “Concessions of any kind earn no good will at all. On the contrary, they tend to confirm the radical in his contempt for the society around him.” He has also contributed to all of the UK’s right-of-center journals—*Freedom Today*, the *Salisbury Review*, and *Right Now!*—and written a booklet (for Right Now Press) on the *Macpherson Report* on the police inves-

tigation of the murder of black teenager Stephen Lawrence, which invidious document introduced to an ungrateful nation Stokely Carmichael’s notion of “institutional racism.”

A tall and imposing man who has served in both the Parachute Regiment and the Special Air Service, Frank Ellis positively relishes confrontation—a characteristic not attributable to many conservatives, and one which has given rise to his nickname, “Frankly Hellish.” Ellis positively fizzes with passion and is greatly to be admired for his assiduity in plowing through these unutterably dreary documents (communists manage the remarkable feat of being simultaneously crazy and boring) to locate the earliest usages of tendentious terms in the arid wastelands of Leninist rhetoric. The bibliography for this little book is an impressive eight pages in length. No one can pretend any longer that p.c. is just some fluffy little well-meaning wish not to offend (although it is that, too); Frank Ellis reveals it unequivocally as the spiritual legacy of the most murderous regimes of a murderous century.

Pulling together this indefatigable research, Ellis has subordinated it to his own well-expressed summations of the p.c. mind-set. Of these, there are many highly quotable examples, such as “The politically correct commissariat condemns us for being ‘judgemental’, yet reserves the right to pass judgement on us.” Or, “the more hostile the New Left was to bourgeois mores and behaviour and the more outrageous its claims, the more tightly it controlled the minds of its youthful followers.” Or,

if money is power, then some will have more power than others. If, however, language is power, then anyone can partake of power, and groups and factions who might otherwise have very little to say to one another, now find they are united in their desire to impose new linguistic norms on mainstream bourgeois society.

Sometimes, Ellis’s profound knowledge of communism leads him to overlook explanations necessary for those who are far less knowledgeable. For example, he does not explain who Bukharin was, nor Liu Shao-Chi, merely telling us that they were brave or foolhardy enough to stand up to Stalin and Mao, respec-

tively. There is an intriguing reference to an unnamed director-general of the BBC, whom one presumes to be Lord Reith, but it would have been nice to have been told. There is a *non sequitur* regarding “the gradual loss of religious conviction—especially strong in the feminised Anglican church.” One knows what he means—that Anglicans have moved away from tradition, and from traditional unquestioning faith—but the thought could perhaps have been phrased differently. A noncommitted reader coming across this sentence might well conclude that the author is saying that women are intrinsically less religious than men—a conclusion clearly open to question. There is at least one highly fanciful mixed metaphor, in the unzoological shape of “a giant arachnid . . . which . . . manages to ejaculate a stream of spores” (by which is meant p.c. carrying on despite the collapse of the Soviet Union).

It also has to be observed that Ellis’s title is a little dull, making what is a lively and lucid book sound like an dry academic treatise—although it is pleasingly laid out, nicely edited, and does feature several apposite cartoons. It is a pity that *Political Correctness and the Theoretical Struggle* has not found a publisher in the United States or the United Kingdom. New Zealand has many estimable qualities, but it is inconveniently far from the rest of us and something of a backwater. (What was it who said, “I went to New Zealand—but it was shut?”) The reason it was published in New Zealand is that the country formed part of Dr. Ellis’s triumphant lecture tour there last year, in which he addressed legislators and academics and was interviewed on radio shows and in newspapers, all on the subject of political correctness—a much-needed antidote to the Pollyannish NZ permanent regime, almost as egregious as Canada in its pursuit of cultural self-degradation. The Maxim Institute is to be commended for its enterprise and energy in organizing what was apparently a stunningly successful program. Dr. Ellis’s booklet is relevant—even vital—to all who suffer from the effects of the p.c. virus, and it is profoundly to be wished that this coruscating work will become widely obtainable far beyond the confines of New Zealand.

Derek Turner is the editor of Right Now!, published in London.

Letter From Poland

by Mark Wegierski

An Anniversary Remembered



On Saturday, July 10, 2004, my cousin and I drove from Ciechocinek to Czechochowa, to attend a celebration of her grandparents' 60th wedding anniversary. Ciechocinek is a spa and resort town about 200 kilometers northwest of Warsaw, Poland. Before the trip began, she had to stop by the aesthetics studio (a type of spa) she manages, which lies near the market square, adjacent to the town's main bookstore. We set off early in the morning in her elegant Peugeot 206, along with her purebred West Highland terrier. It was a hot, sunny day, and we were headed southwest, toward Lodz, the second-largest city in Poland. A super-highway system has yet to be built in Poland, which means that most driving takes place on two-lane highways, where passing plodding trucks or cars is fairly perilous, requiring superb driving skills.

We had to drive through downtown Lodz to reach the southern highway exit. I saw the beautifully restored palaces that had once mostly belonged to Jewish factory owners. The city had been heavily Jewish before World War II. The Poles have respected the city's Jewish heritage, remembering the holocaust, for example, in very solemn ceremonies memorializing the destruction of the Lodz Ghetto by the German occupiers. For several years, Lodz has also hosted an arts festival, "The Dialogue of Four Cultures"—Polish, Jewish, German, and Russian. Before 1939, most of the Jewish population in Poland had been better off economically than the broad mass of the Polish Christian peasants—most of whom had been immured in abject poverty since time immemorial.

We continued toward Piotrkow Trybunalski, an historic town that had served as the seat of Poland's Royal Tribunal for hundreds of years. Turning eastward, we traveled 80 kilometers to reach Zarnow, a small town whose earliest building (the church) dates back to the tenth century. Zarnow is where my

cousin's grandparents live, in a modest house of a few rooms. I was told that, when her grandparents were digging a well, they encountered a wall of rock that might have been a remnant of early medieval walls. Unfortunately, with an overstretched government budget, in a country that is—outside of Warsaw and a few other large centers—subject to considerable, often grinding, poverty, funds for exploratory archeological digs are very limited.

We quickly loaded her grandparents into the car, which was a rather tight fit for four people and an increasingly nervy dog, and our discomfort increased when her grandmother began to suffer from motion sickness. Nevertheless, we persevered and finally reached Czechochowa about 4 P.M. Her family—including her mother, sister, and one brother—lives in a fairly large house with an extensive yard, on the outskirts of the city.

Leaving the dog tied up in the yard, we had to rush by car to the famous Jasna Góra Pauline monastery complex, where a commemorative ceremony was scheduled at the main sanctuary, before the famous icon of the Black Madonna. This was the first time I had been to the shrine.

We drove around the monastery walls to the huge parking lot at the back, at which we were fortunate to find a parking spot. I noted that various small shops selling devotional materials had been built right into what had once been the fortress walls of the monastery. Even in the short time we were there, we saw a fair number of large tour buses coming up the drive. We walked through a large gate-tower toward the main chapel where the Black Madonna resides. My cousin's grandfather had put on his partisan fighter veteran's uniform decorated with many medals. He had been severely wounded in the fighting during the war, and his first wife had been killed by the German occupiers.

The buildings are actually rather small and intimate, not the ponderous and overwhelming façades you would expect at such a world-famous site, although one of the sharp steeples of the monastery can be seen from virtually anywhere in the town.

As we walked into the sanctuary, we noticed a marriage ceremony being con-

ducted directly before the Black Madonna. The icon always has a jewel-encrusted robe for public viewing, so it looks rather different from the unadorned painting. The priest, his attendants, and the young couple were obscured and separated from the main crowd in the chapel by a huge ironwork grille that looks somewhat like an iconostasis in an Orthodox church.

Pilgrims were continually streaming into the sanctuary and joining in the ongoing prayers and canticles of the wedding service.

Unfortunately, it turned out that we had mistakenly arrived about 15 minutes too late, as the anniversary commemoration had been allotted little more than 15 minutes. Disappointed, we participated in the prayers and singing.

Being very tired, I ducked out to the church situated directly beside the sanctuary chapel to admire the magnificent Baroque altar. My near exhaustion tempered my appreciation of the uplifting beauty of the holy site.

Jasna Góra has had a very long history among the Poles. Its central fame derives from the time of the so-called Deluge. In July 1655, Sweden—then a militant, aggressive, Protestant power—invaded Poland from the north, quickly seizing most of the country. Poland (in union with Lithuania) was, at that time, a large, sprawling, but poorly organized state whose borders stretched to Riga in the northeast and Kiev in the southeast. It had been wracked by the Dnieper Cossack rebellion and continual wars with Muscovy. On November 18, 1655, the Swedish general Miller laid siege to the recently fortified monastery with 3,000 soldiers, against a garrison of 170 soldiers, 20 noblemen, and 70 brothers. The indomitable Fr. Augustyn Kordecki decided to resist, despite being massively outnumbered. After 40 days of siege, the Protestant Swedes had failed to take the "fortress of Mary" and abandoned their efforts. The failure of the siege was seen as a miracle brought about by the Virgin Mary's intercession, and it galvanized resistance to the Swedish occupation across all of Poland. On April 1, 1656, the Polish king, Jan Casimir, proclaimed the Virgin Mary the Patroness and Queen of Poland.

In their rising against Russian domi-

nation of a weakening Poland, the Confederates of Bar (including Casimir Pulaski, who would later become a hero of the American War of Independence) seized and then defended the sanctuary between 1769 and 1772. Named after the small southeastern town where they had initially gathered, the Confederates of Bar—who referred to themselves as “soldiers of Mary”—have been dubbed the “Polish Jacobites” by some historians. Although their political aims were rather confused—commingling sincere patriotism and a resistance to reforms that the Polish political system at that time desperately needed—the Confederates set an example of self-sacrifice for future generations. Crushed by the czarist Russian armies, they were one of the first of many generations of Polish freedom fighters who would end up in exile in Siberia or other remote regions of Russia. The Partition of Poland by Prussia/Germany, czarist Russia, and the Habsburg Empire extended from 1795 to 1918—123 years of foreign occupation.

Adam Mickiewicz, the great Polish national poet who was one of the central creators of Romantic and modern Polish nationalism, mentions Mother Mary and Jasna Góra near the very beginning of his great lyric poem “Pan Tadeusz.” One of the three books in the famous *Trylogia* of Polish author Henryk Sienkiewicz (winner of the 1905 Nobel Prize in Literature for his novel on Christians in Nero’s Rome, *Quo Vadis*) deals with the Swedish Deluge (*Potop*), and much of the narrative is focused on the siege of Jasna Góra. One of the last official acts of Pope John Paul II—which had obviously been planned before the onset of his terminal illness—was the delivery of a letter to the prior of Jasna Góra on April 1, 2005, along with some new “crowns” for the Black Madonna icon.

An anniversary banquet was served back at the house at 8 P.M. I savored all of the delicious food—pork cutlets and roast beef, washed down with mineral water and some celebratory champagne. There were about 15 people at the large table, including cousins from various branches of the family. There was a separate table for the children in an adjoining room, and the Westie enjoyed tidbits given to him from the dinner table.

Joining in the boisterous conversation at the table, I was told by my cousin’s grandfather (obviously with some exaggeration) that theirs was a ducal family renowned in Polish history. I needled

a young male cousin about the brand of mineral water they were serving, which was being hawked on Polish television at that time by Cindy Crawford, who says four words in Polish during the entire commercial.

The conversations continued at a rapid clip until about 11 P.M., when my cousin drove me to the Ibis Hotel in Czeszochowa, as there was no room left at the house. I checked into the hotel, thanked my cousin profusely, and made my way to my room. After a long, hot shower, I quickly fell asleep in the comfortable bed, having enjoyed one of the longest and most eventful days of my life.

Born in Toronto of Polish immigrant parents, Mark Wegierski is fluent in Polish and has written for Canadian, American, Polish, British, and German publications. This article commemorates the 350th anniversary of the defense of Jasna Góra (November-December 1655), which saved Catholic Poland.

Letter From Germany

by Josef Schüsslburner

Another Liberation Theology



It has been more than four centuries since the last time that a German was elevated to the chair of Saint Peter. Pope Hadrian VI (1522-1523) was from Utrecht, a city within the Holy Roman Empire. Before his election as pope, he had been the teacher of Erasmus of Rotterdam, the principal representative of German *Humanismus*, the intellectual movement of that time, when Germany was the academic center of the Western world. Hadrian VI was a pious intellectual who was heavily resented by the political class of the time because of his insistence on the morality of everyday life. His similarity to Benedict XVI is striking. In his short tenure, Hadrian VI did not succeed in preventing the spread of Protestantism, which he did not want to oppose by political means but by persuasive theological arguments and reforming the Church from within.

Today, the Catholic Church in Germany is not threatened by a new branch

of Christianity but by a sort of liberation theology that is much more insidious than the Latin American version that Cardinal Ratzinger successfully opposed as chief of the Vatican’s Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Liberation theology in Germany is the civic religion of Rousseau, who deemed such an official belief system necessary for a democratic regime. The major tenet of the German version of civil religion was recently expressed by the leader of the Christian Democratic Party (CDU) (and chancellor-in-waiting of Germany), Angela Merkel. Recognizing the singularity of the holocaust, she argued, has liberated the Germans and made them democratic. Consequently, those who do not agree with this assessment (but think, for instance, that other socialists such as the Soviets, the Maoists, and Pol Pot were worse than the Nazis) are “extremists” and, therefore, undemocratic—and should be sentenced to jail for something Americans call hate speech (thought-crimes). These “Christian” democrats do not hold that it is repentance for having fallen away from the Christian Faith (and opening the door to Nazi rule) that engenders liberation. Instead, a state-imposed belief in certain “historical truths” reinforces the people’s apostasy and concomitant relativism in moral matters. If God existed, Auschwitz would not have happened; since Auschwitz is an irrefutable truth, protected by democratic criminal law, God cannot exist: This reasoning forms the basis for the new German liberation theology.

This political theology puts Christianity in a defensive posture that is, at least with respect to Catholicism, entirely absurd, since it was in the Catholic areas of Germany where Hitler had the biggest difficulties gaining voters and adherents. (It was comparatively easy for him in former liberal areas.) The essential breakthrough came when, in 1932, Hitler finally succeeded in convincing former Socialist voters that nationalism was better suited to socialism than internationalism was, an idea even Stalin could embrace, which explains, to a certain extent, the possibility of the Nazi-Soviet pact of 1939, an essential precondition of World War II. The CDU is obviously too stupid—or, rather, too indulgent toward the superficial pleasures of moral relativism—to understand that the federal German version of liberation theology gives a heavy and entirely undeserved political premium to the socialist left, reborn

as internationalists. It was a CDU member who, as federal interior minister, proclaimed January 27 (the day of the communist army's conquest of Auschwitz) a public holiday, which implies that the totalitarian Soviet Red Army, led by mass murderer Josef Stalin, was a sort of sacramental instrument.

That the new German liberation theology is now the state religion was recently revealed by the plan of the postcommunist/social-democratic government of the city of Berlin to offer "values education" in the schools—an alternative to the religious teaching of the churches—designed to catechize the children with the dogmas of the liberation theology. At least in this instance, both Catholics and Protestants recognized that this presented a danger to their Faith.

In many other instances, Church leaders who lack the intellectual capacity of Cardinal Ratzinger are apparently unable to grasp these dangers: When Cardinal Meisner of Cologne preached on the sanctity of life, drawing a line from Herod to Stalin and Hitler to abortions, the leader of a competing religious minority claimed that he had devalued the holocaust by daring to compare it to abortion. And, instead of challenging this

strange judgment, Cardinal Lehmann of Mainz received this minority leader cordially, and the two agreed to enhance mutual tolerance by increasing their fight against the political right. Cardinal Lehmann also failed to protect one of the last traditional Catholics remaining in the CDU, member of parliament Martin Hohmann, when he was attacked for his defense of Germans against the dogmas of liberation theology.

Proponents of Germany's liberation theology do not hesitate to send "nonbelievers" (violators of "democratic" criminal law) to jail. Thus, Catholics are not permitted to consider their religion to be the one true Faith, superior to other religious denominations. And the Protestant churches have virtually abandoned missionary activities among Jews, since it is undemocratic to consider the Protestant Faith to be true and Judaism false. Once all of the Church leaders accept all other religions as equally true—as required by "democratic tolerance"—liberation theology will demand that Judaism and commemorations of the holocaust be considered superior to Christianity. As a compromise, conversion to Islam may be the solution—which has a certain logic to it, since Islam may be thought of as the

revenge of Judeo-Christianity against the Christianity of the Gentiles, which found its expression in Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy.

Germany is no longer the intellectual center of the Western world, as she was during the pontificate of Hadrian VI, and the fatherland of Pope Benedict XVI may not be of major importance for the survival of Christianity, which has stronger roots in the Americas. On the other hand, setting aside the hand of Providence, the Catholic Church has been the most successful and longest-lasting multinational organization in history because Her constitutional structure is modeled on that of the Holy Roman Empire, which is Germany, the Roman Empire continued in a Christian fashion. What would it mean for the rest of the world if there was no longer a Catholic Germany?

Unfortunately, since Pope Benedict's pontificate is expected to be short, like that of the last German pope, he may not have time to compel his compatriots to find answers to these difficult questions.

Josef Schüsslburner is the author of Demokratie-Sonderweg Bundesrepublik.

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Jihad's Enablers

Almost 80 years ago, Julien Benda published his tirade against the intellectual corruption of his time, *La Trahison des Clercs*. The “scribes” in question are those who traffic in words and ideas. For generations before the 20th century, Benda wrote, members of the Western intellectual elite made sure that “humanity did evil, but honored good.” The “treason” occurred when they gave up promoting lasting values that transcend ethnic and other divisions of mankind and allowed political preferences to distort their understanding of the intellectual vocation as such.

Benda's argument, while based on the flawed assumptions of the Enlightenment, found wide resonance at a time when fascism, Nazism, and Bolshevism dominated Europe's political and intellectual scene. Today, the treason of the elite class takes the opposite form. It upholds the allegedly universal propositions of “democracy” and “multiculturalism” to the detriment of the particular value of our civilization and its fruits. In no field is this problem more visible than in the schizophrenic approach of the elite class to the “War on Terror.”

The fatuity of the antiterrorist strategy of President George W. Bush and his national-security team was unintentionally encapsulated in a speech he gave to the National Endowment for Democracy on October 6. He opened by stating that America stands guard on “tense borders” (by which he meant the borders of Iraq, not those on the Rio Grande). We are battling “a global campaign of fear . . . the mortal danger to all humanity” with a “global campaign of freedom”—and we will win. “The evil” of September 11 “is very different from the religion of Islam,” and its proponents “distort the idea of jihad into a call for terrorist murder against Christians and Jews and Hindus.”

There were several noteworthy incongruities in Mr. Bush's speech. “The terrorists regard Iraq as the central front in their war against humanity and we must recognize Iraq as the central front in our war on terror,” he said, ignoring the fact that his administration's policies have transformed Iraq into that “central front.” He had many harsh words to say

about the “authoritarian regimes” in Syria and Iran, alleging that they “aggressively fund the spread of radical, intolerant versions of Islam,” but he spared Saudi Arabia—the proselytizer in chief of Islamic radicalism—of any such censure and effectively gave a green light to Pakistan's Pervez Musharraf to continue his art of running with the hare and hunting with the hounds. He spoke of “American actions to protect Muslims” in Bosnia and Kosovo as if they were something to be proud of and as if they had not secured a resilient base for *jihad* in the heart of Europe.

All of those inconsistencies pale in comparison to Mr. Bush's fundamental error: his implication that lethal violence against non-Muslims is a “distortion” of *jihad*. He cemented the error with the assertion that

[m]any Muslim scholars have already publicly condemned terrorism, often citing Chapter 5, Verse 32 of the Koran, which states that killing an innocent human being is like killing all humanity, and saving the life of one person is like saving all of humanity.

In reality, “the idea of *jihad*” is a highly developed doctrine and legal system of mandatory violence against nonbelievers. It made Islam the first political ideology to adopt terrorism as an acceptable tool of policy, not as a temporary and unwelcome expedient. While it is possible to dispute the details of Al Qaeda's theological justifications for terror, it is not possible to dispute that its arguments are based on standard Islamic sources, precedents, and methods of deduction. Those sources and principles are independent of any dubious or capricious interpretations of the Koran or the Hadith.

The jubilant masses thronging the streets to celebrate September 11 may not have known much about theology and jurisprudence, but their *imams* and *madrassa* teachers did. Even if the latter disapproved of Bin Laden's methods, they would be hard pressed to reject his fundamental claim that his guidance is rooted in orthodox Islamic scripture and



tradition. The gap between the pillars of respected “mainstream” Islamic thought at Cairo's Al-Azhar University and “the evil” of September 11 does not compare to the gap between Pope Benedict and Eric Rudolph, but merely to that between Vladimir Ilich Lenin and Pol Pot.

Even Mr. Bush's Koranic citation was a distortion of the verse, which states that “if anyone slew a person—unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land—it would be as if he slew the whole people” (emphasis added). Immediately thereafter follows a list of horrid torments, including death by crucifixion, for those who create “mischief.” That loophole embraces all those who resist the establishment of Muslim rule or who disobey *sharia* once it is established. Furthermore, Mr. Bush should be told that one single Koranic verse, the “Verse of the Sword” (9:5)—which gives the infidel the choice between conversion or death—abrogates all 124 preceding verses, which are the ones cited most regularly by Islam's apologists to prove its tolerance and benevolence.

After more than four years, Mr. Bush has not grasped the most important lesson of September 11: that *Islam as such*, and not some allegedly aberrant variety of it, poses a threat to our culture and civilization. That this fact creates a conceptual problem for the liberal wing of the elite class is obvious; but among reasonable and patriotic Americans, who have elected and reelected Mr. Bush in the belief that he is one of them, the debate over the nature of Islam should have been long over. Their fathers did not debate, for years and years after Pearl Harbor, whether Shintoism was essentially peaceful whereas only Bushido was bad. Had they done so, the Greater Asian Co-Prosperty Sphere would remain firmly in place to this day.

While it is at least conceivable that Mr. Bush knows or suspects the real score on Islam but feels constrained to pretend otherwise, for reasons good or bad, the moral and intellectual paralysis of the liberal end of the Washington spectrum is terminal. The Democrats' worldview rejects *in principle* the notion that religious faith can be a prime motivating factor in human affairs. Having reduced religion, literature, and art to "narratives" and "metaphors" that merely reflect prejudices based on the distribution of power, the left treats the jihadist mind-set as a pathology that should be salved by treating causes external to Islam itself.

The result is a plethora of proposed liberal "cures" that are as likely to succeed in making us safe from terrorism as snake oil is likely to cure leukemia. Abroad, we are told, we need to address political and economic grievances of the impoverished masses. At home, we need more tolerance, greater inclusiveness, less profiling, and a more determined outreach to the minorities who feel marginalized and threatened by law enforcement. The failure of such "cures" leads to more pathological self-examination and morbid self-doubt. If the spread of *jihad* is not caused by the ideology of *jihad* itself, the argument goes, then it must be our own fault. The issues of immigration, identity, loyalty, and culture are accordingly not treated as legitimate concerns. The result is a cloud-cuckooland in which much of what is said or written about terrorism is not about relevant information that helps us know the enemy but about domestic political agendas, ideology, and psychology.

The New America Foundation's Conference on Terrorism, Security and America's Purpose, which was held in Washington, D.C., on September 6-7, provided an excellent illustration of this mind-set. It featured over 70 prominent names, politicians, top bureaucrats, policy analysts, nationally known journalists and top-tier academics. It was scary.

There was billionaire "philanthropist" George Soros insisting that the War on Terror has "done more harm than good." It has alienated Muslims and diverted our attention from other vital missions, such as fostering "democratic development in order to provide legitimate avenues for dealing with grievances that otherwise might be exploited by terrorist movements."

Francis Fukuyama saw the root problem in Muslims' "alienation from moder-

nity." The solution would be for young Muslims to learn how to choose a personal identity just like everybody else, rather than accept Osama's prefabricated one.

Madeleine Albright declared that it is "important to listen to what others are telling you"—which was rich, coming from her—and to distinguish friends from foes. James Steinberg of the Brookings Institution urged America to ask herself how she can help to provide "better governance, better economic lives, better political contexts" to the Muslim heartland. Sen. Joseph Biden argued for debt relief and funding of education programs in Muslim countries. Former senator Warren Rudman argued that "America and our allies must address global poverty, disease, and underdevelopment in a far more aggressive and comprehensive manner." Gen. Wesley Clark (who helped make Kosovo safe for the KLA) now wants a new global security framework based on the United Nations.

On the key issue of the identity of the enemy—the scriptural message and historical record of Islam—the conference had nothing to say. On the role of the Muslim diaspora in the West, the conference's Summary Report was brief and to the point: "The government must rebuild vital relationships with Muslim and Arab communities in the U.S. and around the world, that have been so severely strained by actions and policies undertaken in the name of homeland security." Furthermore, "changes in visa policy and passport reform . . . have made America less attractive to students and visitors" from the Muslim world, which is allegedly detrimental to U.S. interests. In addition, privacy and due process must be protected so as to avoid "disproportionate law enforcement efforts against Muslim Americans."

This mind-set at one end of the elite spectrum, and Mr. Bush's incongruities at the other, have contributed to the fact that we are losing the War on Terror. The detachment from America's traditional culture, so pervasive in all segments of the elite class, has been integrated into the culture itself to the extent that Islamic terrorism is being chronically misdiagnosed and therefore is becoming effectively unstoppable. Its networks may have been damaged and disrupted, and Bin Laden's cause is, in many places, in the hands of self-starters and gifted amateurs, but, on the whole, the world looks more favorable to his objectives than it

did in the immediate aftermath of September 11, 2001.

Those who claim that profiling is bad, that open borders are good, that "true Islam" is peaceful, and that *jihad* is anything other than a permanent declaration of war on all non-Muslims belong to the culture that has lost its bond with nature, history, and the supporting community. That supporting community, the real nation, is out there in the fly-over states, working and paying taxes. When it is told of Islam's "peace and tolerance," or when its children are forced to recite Muslim prayers in state schools, it grumbles about the stupidity or ineptitude of those in charge, but it does not suspect outright betrayal. In the meantime, the quiet onslaught continues unabated, across the unprotected southern border and through JFK and O'Hare. It does not bring any benefit to this country, just as it has brought none to Europe, and its cost is incalculable.

Those Americans who love their land and who put their families, their neighborhoods, and their people before all others need to stop the madness. They are normal. Those who tell them that their attachments should be global, that the Marines should patrol the banks of the Euphrates and not those of the Rio Grande, and that their lands and neighborhoods belong to whoever decides to settle in them are sick and evil. They are *jihad*'s useful idiots, enablers, and fellow travelers.

The elite class has every intention of continuing to "fight" the War on Terror without naming the enemy, without revealing his beliefs, without unmasking his intentions, without offending his accomplices, without expelling his fifth columnists, and without ever daring to win. Their crime can and must be stopped. The Founding Fathers of the United States overthrew the colonial government for offenses far lighter than those of which the traitor class is guilty.

A new strategy is needed to give America an edge in this war. It can never be "won" in the sense of eliminating the phenomenon of terrorism altogether, but it can be successfully pursued to the point where the threat to the homeland comes as near to zero as possible. The victory will come, to put it simply, not by conquering Mecca for America but by disengaging America from Mecca and by excluding Mecca from America; not by eliminating the risk but by managing it wisely, resolutely, and permanently. c

IMMIGRATION

More for the Money

by Don Barnett

The President's 2006 budget, called "austere" by some in the mainstream media, provides for an increase in spending for refugee resettlement by \$154 million, allowing for the arrival of about 20,000 more refugees in 2006.

President Bush has taken a personal interest in refugee resettlement, and the consensus among immigration restrictionists, both within and outside of government, seems to be that raising objections to growth in the resettlement program is not worth the effort. That is not irrational, considering the bad press that such objections would bring, and in light of the refugee program's size relative to other immigration programs.

In 2005, the U.S. refugee program will admit approximately 55,000 people—the same number who illegally cross the border, intending to stay, every three weeks or so. The Bush amnesty could eventually make permanent legal residents of up to 12 million aliens who either crossed the border illegally or overstayed a non-immigrant visa. Direct relatives of the newly legalized could swell the U.S. population by 50 million in a few years.

Against this, the refugee program seems insignificant.

But the refugee program is tightly interwoven with both legal and illegal immigration and has effects that go well beyond the official quota. Changes are under way in the program that will amplify these effects, ultimately driving up all forms of immigration.

The U.S. refugee-resettlement contracting industry is abuzz over a recent State Department study calling for more refugee numbers, more power to NGOs in selecting refugees, and use of more relaxed criteria in the definition of a refugee. According to the study, the State Department's refugee bureau must

develop a sense of mission about adding one or two new [refugee] groups to the [U.S. refugee] pipeline development process each

month and think of itself as the component in the decision making system that gives the benefit of the doubt to resettlement.

In other words, the State Department must become the principal backer of the U.S. refugee-resettlement NGOs and must more actively promote resettlement here rather than treat resettlement as a last resort.

According to Kelly Ryan, deputy assistant secretary of the State Department, the government-commissioned recommendations, entitled "The United States Refugee Admissions Program: Reforms for a New Era of Refugee Resettlement," were the result of an "independent study." The author of the study, former INS counsel and University of Virginia professor of international law David Martin, said that many in government wanted to see higher refugee numbers, and the study was the result of "anger" over recent lower admission numbers. Mrs. Ryan claims that the "best ideas come from the advocacy community," when it comes to selecting groups to admit under the refugee program. Essentially, "advocacy community" means the federal contractors who profit from the program.

Some U.S.-based refugee agencies are establishing overseas posts at which to seek out candidates. Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), a federal contractor in search of a mission since Jewish emigration from the former Soviet Union slowed and shifted from the United States to Israel, opened an office in Nairobi, Kenya, the hub of global officialdom's response to Africa's refugee crisis. HIAS's increasing role in bringing Muslims to the United States has understandably upset many American Jews.

Ralston Deffenbaugh, Jr., director of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS), which was founded to assist World War II refugees, states that, today, more than half of the refugees his agency resettles are Muslims, mostly from East Africa, where LIRS maintains a presence "on the ground."

As if anticipating criticisms regarding the obvious conflict of interests at work, the study notes that,

Given that the new era may require a dozen or more decisions

each year on new resettlement initiatives, more occasions may arise for critics to charge improper influence. Some recent legislative proposals meant to give NGOs wider authority to help set admissions priorities through refugee response teams perhaps composed exclusively of NGO personnel, are freighted with long-term peril of this sort. Such proposals might succeed in getting admissions numbers up but at the likely cost of feeding a backlash against what critics will see as interest-group distortion.

The United States has always conferred refugee status to entire groups, with membership in the group providing a presumptive "well-founded fear of persecution" required by law. The sea change envisioned in this study is the designation of one or two *new* refugee groups *each month* under relaxed selection standards in order to ensure a steady flow of refugees. When picking a group for the program, the criteria usually used to identify a refugee will be complemented by such imponderables as the extent to which individual "human potential" has been wasted. The study would identify numerous, but smaller, groups to supplement the major Cold War flows from the Eastern bloc and Southeast Asia, which are declining in numbers.

The groups receiving most-favored-refugee status would be tightly defined, resulting in an ideal size of 5,000 to 15,000, according to the study's author. So, for example, to prevent dozens of new flying wedges for ever-growing groups, U.S. refugee status would be conferred on members of tribal group A from country B, resident in a U.N. refugee camp in country X for N or more years.

The resettlement of Somali Bantu from camps in Kenya, which began recently, will serve as the model for the new program. But it is a highly problematic and untested model. Though currently limited to under 15,000 individuals, the Bantu have *direct* clan relationships with at least 100,000 others in Somalia. Based on experience, it is realistic to expect that most of these will make it here one way or another. Another one million Bantus live in Somalia,

of which many can be expected to try to emigrate, thanks to expanded ethnic networks, their enhanced chances of success, and what, for many, is a newfound ethnic identity conferred upon them by international bureaucrats.

Even the study's supporters cannot hide concerns about the explosive potential of a revamped refugee-resettlement program and have proposed comical controls such as conferring most-favored-refugee status in secret—an impossible task when relying on ethnic clubs in the United States with extensive ties in the sending countries to recommend the next favored group.

The desire for secrecy is based on sound impulses and an understanding of how refugee resettlement really works.

Whenever a group is designated as favored for resettlement, it attracts large numbers of new members. According to David Martin, those who are not in any danger in their home country arrange to adopt the favored group's characteristics, even moving to a refugee camp, if that increases their chances of resettlement. Also, any hint of a chance at resettlement causes the potential beneficiaries, advised by their "advocacy community" and helpful federal contractors, to refuse to consider other options, such as going home or resettling in a nearby country.

Expectations of a generous reception in the West contributed to the refugee outflows of the 1980's and 90's and continue to exert a strong pull in the decision to seek asylum in the West today.

No refugee flow to the United States has ever stopped with the originally designated group, and, in fact, the small-groups model is likely to set off multiple self-propagating flows, some of which have the potential to reach the size of the Cold War flows from Southeast Asia and the former Soviet Union.

Until the 1980's, the program was limited by the absorptive capacity of the organizations involved in the program. But then the charities morphed into moneymaking government contractors—lately they call themselves "faith-based"—with huge incentives for program growth. The State Department now audits the use of government funds by some 400 NGOs dedicated to refugee resettlement in the United States. (Another 160 are mainly involved in refugee assistance overseas.) Most of the staff of these NGOs are recent refugee arrivals. The study states that they should not be

expected to

shy away from supporting refugee groups to which they have ties. Our democratic system makes such advocacy legitimate, even on the part of persons or entities affiliated with organizations that have contractual ties with a government program.

Until very recently, the program was tethered by U.S. foreign policy and national interest. Foreign policy now plays a very diminished role. A favorite discussion topic when refugee contractors meet with their contracting government agencies is "refugee resettlement as a weapon in the War on Terror." To some in the Bush administration, this is a way to repair our image in the Third World—the open hand of hospitality for those who are with us; the sword for our enemies.

Indeed, our foreign entanglements would seem to present endless opportunities to use refugee groups as currency in international transactions. The United States, for example, could promise to resettle a restive minority in exchange for a concession to our interests from the country trying to expel the minority. "Ethnic cleansing" is made easier and is a more tempting goal for tyrants when Washington is willing to lend a hand in the process. Of course, such arrangements would never become official policy, but it would be more than naive to think this will not happen as part of a system in which the United States commits her refugee program to finding a dozen or more new resettlement groups each year. Such a system would be increasingly reliant on international deal brokers with their own narrow agendas.

A global human-rights lobby overwhelmingly floated by government money largely dictates the shape of the refugee program today. This government-supported lobby can claim a string of legislative victories enlisting the American welfare state for this or that group outside of our borders.

The NGO lobby is gearing up to meet recommendations from the new study with a publicity campaign for expanded refugee resettlement to the United States, complete with the usual appeals to "traditional American values"—but nothing about this is traditional.

Don Barnett is a fellow at the Center for Immigration Studies in Washington, D.C.

LITERATURE

An Enduring Feast

by Christopher Sandford

Some cult writers are admired more for what they mean than for what they accomplish. The works of the novelist, diarist, and prolific reviewer Anthony Powell (1905-2000) enjoyed only modest commercial success; Powell groused to his British publisher in 1961, "I perfectly realise that I am not an enormous seller, but I *am* a seller, and certainly give Heinemann's increasingly unattractive list some prestige." But the comically understated, not infrequently sinister crew of his 12-volume *A Dance to the Music of Time*—the grotesque "Ken" Widmerpool, industrialist, fellow-traveler, and deranged victim of a satanic cult (*Hearing Secret Harmonies*); the impecunious, pill-popping author of no fixed abode, X. Trapnel (*Books Do Furnish A Room*)—have passed into folklore. As military enthusiasts adopt period costume to reenact Civil War battles to the least detail, so addicts of *Dance* gather to recite whole scenes involving such characters. Powell himself, whose centenary falls on December 21, remains a unique source of information for 20th-century social history—schooling, clothes, diet, manners, the degradation of religion—and on the working of the British military machine from the inside out—this last, in the words of his fellow veteran and author Simon Raven, achieving "a combination of poetry, reflection, satire and farce which no other living writer could have conceived or carried through."

Some American readers, even so, have chafed at Powell's apparent obsession with English upper-middle-class, metropolitan life, especially at a time when some of literature's more parochial shackles were being blasted away by the likes of Norman Mailer. "Can we dream of a homegrown war novel without a single battle scene or—even worse—without a single bedroom scene?" asked Melvin Maddocks, one of a new breed of switched-on critics for whom "doing your thing" was fast ceasing to carry any hint of opprobrium, and the concept of delayed gratification seemed as dated as a chastity belt. Yet Powell's world, where most of the characters, it's true, are unfashionably pre-Diana—what is today called "re-

pressed"—fairly teems with sex. His first novel, *Afternoon Men* (1931), aroused both comparisons to Hemingway and, perhaps surprisingly for an author sometimes thought of as writing in the fustian impasto of Victorian English, a threatened prosecution for obscenity. The *Dance* sequence is so generally imbued with a calm awe that its characters' love-making seems just another form of comic social discourse. The eventual mini-series (reaching the screen shortly before the author's death) begins with a deft little prologue recreating, with laudable self-control, a leisurely exchange between a young man in spats and his nude mistress—an unimprovable visual symbol of the eight hours that follow. Powell himself, happily married for 65 years to Lady Violet Pakenham, the daughter of an earl, noted cheerfully that he was "always attracted by girls who look as if they'd slept under a bush for a week."

This was the man who spent much of his early adulthood among Soho's swingers rather than the pristine ruling class and, consequently, thought nothing of depicting the insane, drugged, or dead in his fiction. As has often been remarked, Powell's *roman à clef* is really a form of soap opera, with cyclical themes and characters, and an infallible knack—the envy of many a television screenwriter—of ending each episode with a crisis. (Powell spent the winter of 1936-37 script doctoring for Warner Brothers, an experience, however venal, he claimed was invaluable "when one came to the architecture" of the *Dance*.) Like the longer-running TV serials, the books are also a prodigious feat of logistics, maneuvering some 500 players through seven decades, from the Great War to the Moon landings. As in Poussin's allegorical painting from which Powell took his title, recurring patterns abound, as do a generous quota of rank coincidences. When the series' narrator, Nick Jenkins, joins the army in 1939, he is promptly assigned to the corrosive Widmerpool, his school contemporary of 20 years earlier. Not long after reading this particular twist, I found myself sitting with a young friend in Bertorelli's restaurant in London, engaged in a lively debate about the peacetime profession of Jenkins' other army colleague, Odo Stevens. Years later, Stevens becomes an accomplished essayist and best-selling author. Wasn't it a purveyor of liquid manure? No, that was Widmerpool's father. Actually, Stevens had traveled in ladies' undergarments, or was it costume jewelry . . . This was the

sort of slightly demented exchange readily familiar to addicts of Powell's vivid, self-contained world, and the stuff of popular internet quizzes to this day.

Those of us who have attended the conventions and subscribed to the newsletter know that Powell, if temporarily left behind by fashion, remains the single most readable chronicler of English 20th-century life. Arrayed for the opposition are those who never bought into the *Dance*'s more baroque style and apparent pretension, among them Evelyn Waugh's son Auberon, who wrote this of the series' narrator: "I see him as an odious poseur, a ponderous and conceited public-school show-off whose ludicrous one man act can appeal only to the socially and intellectually insecure." When, in 1990, Waugh reviewed *Miscellaneous Verdicts*, Powell's best-selling collection of his assorted journalism, he took the opportunity to denounce the author's "tortuous style" and—as if there could be anything worse—"unbridled snobbery." This seems inadequate. Snobbery abounds in 20th-century literature, and not only that of the 1920's and 30's. True, Powell had (or, rather, acquired) an affinity for the sort of Englishman whose chief characteristics are a gentlemanly self-deprecation, along with that faint suggestion of bumbling and general air of one born to the "incestuous bartering-house for vested interests," as John Osborne termed the ruling class in 1960, in a hint of the coming end of deference. Powell's prose style could also lapse into the self-parodic, a third party being "an additional personage," a simple request for a lift "ill becom[ing] a native of this country to seek transport from a transatlantic visitor, guest to our shores." Waugh, as did many others, thought that "ultimately" Powell's appeal lay in such brazen gymnastics, along with the attendant parade of "extras from P.G. Wodehouse." When some of these remarks appeared in the *Sunday Telegraph*, Powell, a 30-year veteran of the paper's sister title, quit on the spot.

The *Dance*, then, may have an old-fashioned roll to it, reveling in such terms as "sun spectacles" and "gramophone" and "omnibus," but beyond the dowager manner, Powell's genius was to sustain a vibrant, and highly credible, imaginative world. (In this, perhaps, he approaches Waugh senior's *Sword of Honour* trilogy.) Although Powell deplored the habit of identifying "real-life" models for his characters—deflecting, with unfailing civility, the most earnest enquirers—he was not above scattering a few artful clues when

it came to his memoirs. Hugh Moreland is plainly based on Powell's close friend Constant Lambert (1905-51), the briefly celebrated composer and author of *Music Ho!* X. Trapnel bears striking sartorial affinity with the indigent and thirsty dandy (and woefully neglected writer) Julian Maclaren-Ross. The monstrous Widmerpool mines a rich seam of Reginald Manners-Buller (known at the bar as Bullying-Manner), Lord Chancellor in the Macmillan government, along with trace elements of Powell's brother-in-law Lord Longford, who always claimed the role for himself. Most contemporaries were convinced that Powell drew the figure of Erridge from George Orwell, who also spent time posing as a tramp in a gesture of class goodwill. The fictional Pam Flitton and Mona Templer clearly echo Sonia Brownell, an artist's model known fondly as the Euston Venus, who eventually married Orwell on his deathbed. The equally libidinous Sir Magnus Donners doffs a hat to the first Lord Beaverbrook, relentlessly vulgar Canadian billionaire proprietor of the *Daily Express*. Dr. Trelawney, who opens and closes the series in an obvious frame, almost as though Powell saw him as embodying the century, is the diabolist Aleister Crowley.

If not exactly required reading these days, Powell's masterpiece is one of English literature's enduring feats and might be one of the few things that nurtures an awareness of an older, reticent England, not dead but gone into hiding until the present tabloid version self-destructs. The author himself lived long enough to see such bracing developments as punk rock and Sarah, duchess of York, as well as a modern idiom in which *domestics* would come to refer to assaults, not servants—all recorded in his wonderfully mordant diaries. A modest man with a profound dislike of reckless informality and self-publicity, Powell continued working almost until the end, publishing the final volume of the *Journals* in 1997, the year in which *Dance* was finally filmed. The sheer vitality of the characters survived even this tepid adaptation. It all remains good, dirty, literary fun, a brilliantly contrived escape from the banality of the real world.

Christopher Sandford's articles on popular culture have appeared in the Times, Daily Telegraph, Daily Mail, Spectator, and Seattle Times, among others.

Limping to Hell With Good Intentions

Film titles do not come more portentous than *A History of Violence*. Entering a Manhattan theater to view David Cronenberg's latest cinematic lesson, I was half expecting the usher to hand me a notebook, the better to take down its finer points. To my surprise, the film largely conformed to standard Hollywood conventions, however suffused with Cronenberg's Canadian moralism. The narrative reworks, albeit in modern dress, the hoariest of western clichés—the one about the fellow who gains an unwanted reputation for gunslinging and thereby attracts sidewinders from distant parts bent on testing his deadly mettle.

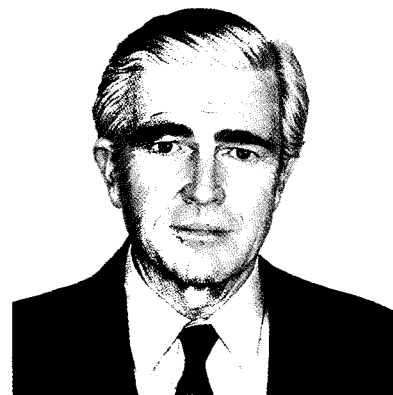
The reluctant slinger in this case is a man more given to slinging hash than guns. Tom Stall (Viggo Mortenson) is a devoted husband and father living in Millbrook, Indiana, where he owns the local diner. A salt-of-the-earth sort of fellow, Stall seems unremarkable enough at first. His gentle face seems to proclaim him an inoffensive nice guy. But then there are his eyes: They are strangely mournful—or are they haunted? Either way, he is not the kind you would expect to turn violent. Or so he seems, until two thugs force his hand.

We meet these cretinous hombres in the aftermath of a gas station hold-up miles away from Millbrook. They have just gunned down two people, who lie oozing blood on the floor of the station's convenience store. Then a traumatized seven-year-old girl emerges from the rest room. Seeing her, the younger thug aims his gun at her face and shoots her point blank. We see his gun in extreme close-up, hear it fire, but, fortunately, we are spared the sight of its impact. Instead, the camera cuts to Tom's seven-year-old daughter waking from a nightmare and screaming that she has seen a monster.

Tom rushes to her bedside to assure her that "There are no monsters." But, of course, we know better. And Tom—devoted father and loving husband—may be one himself.

Since this is a movie, we know it will not be long before the killers cross Stall's path. Before they do, however, we learn a bit about Tom and his wife, Edie (Maria Bello). They are happily married with two lovely children. Their daughter (Heidi Hayes) is a darling blonde, and their son, Jack (Ashton Holmes), seems to be an obedient 16-year-old who commendably avoids trouble at every turn. When a school bully challenges him to a fight, he unhesitatingly backs down, a mature—if Milquetoast—decision. In fact, Jack's mildness is characteristic of the Stalls. They are the all-American, middle-class, church-going family. Crucifixes hang conspicuously from their necks, and their Irish surname suggests they are practicing Catholics. Cronenberg does all he can to emphasize their turn-the-other-cheek niceness so that we are not at all surprised when hell breaks loose, shattering their cozy domesticity.

Predictably, the killers enter Tom's diner one night to hold it up. Quickly divining their intention, Tom offers them whatever is in the till. That's not good enough, however. They pull their guns and, to show they mean business, the younger one shoves a waitress against a wall to shoot her. With that, Tom throws a pot of steaming coffee in the older miscreant's face, vaults the counter, grabs the spluttering thug's gun and blasts the other through the door. Scalded though he is, the older one then manages to stab Tom through his left foot. In response, Tom turns the gun to good effect on him also. From then on, Tom limps like the devil, both literally and symbolically. Echoing



A History of Violence

Produced and distributed by

New Line Cinema

Directed by David Cronenberg

Screenplay by Josh Olson

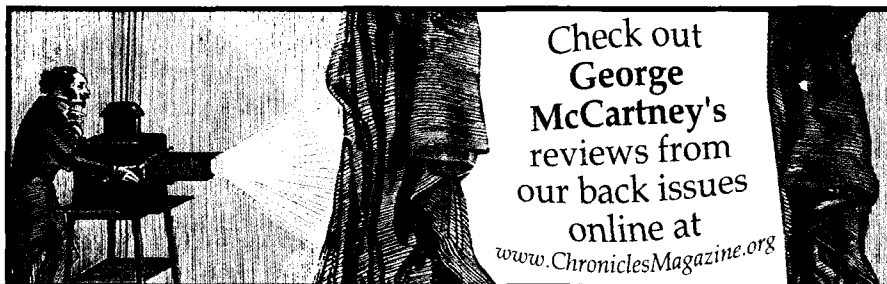
*from the graphic novel by
John Wagner and Vince Locke*

Lucifer's foot, which was cloven when he dashed it on the floor of Hell, Tom's wounded extremity signifies that his demon nature has been awakened, and pandemonium is in session.

Sure enough, local media publicity draws some mysterious mobsters to sleepy Millbrook. They park outside his home in a huge black Chrysler 300 and later visit his diner, crowded with his newly acquired admirers. Their leader, Fogarty (Ed Harris), insists on calling Tom "Joey" and insinuates they have a mutual history back in Philadelphia, a history of violence that cost the blacksuited gangster his left eye. Impressively sinister with his tight, wolfish grin and mottled eye, Harris may or may not be a symbol of Tom's past. Still, there is no mistaking that he is symptomatic of the return of the repressed, thickening the plot.

From this point, Cronenberg pushes his narrative further and further over the top, until it culminates in a comic Grand Guignol. He wants to instruct us that old devils never die, but the oddly mixed tones of his script blunt his would-be moral. It is, by turns, hokey-jokey and, worse, archly knowing.

For professional criminals, Harris and his accomplices are laughably public about their intentions. They go about their business with all the discretion of warning lights at a railway crossing. They relentlessly hound Tom and his family in full view of whoever cares to take notice.



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Then Tom's son suddenly stops turning the other cheek. When the same bully who tried to provoke him into a fight taunts him for not living up to his father's sudden heroic fame, he flattens the lout with enough blows to send him to the hospital. Afterward, an upset Tom remonstrates that, "in this family, we don't settle matters by hitting people." When Jack retorts, "No, in this family we shoot them," Tom smacks him. So, you see, violence begets violence. But does it in quite this way? Cronenberg rides his aroused-demon thesis so hard that he abandons all psychological plausibility. If there is one thing bullies buckle to, it is the other guy's willingness to fight back. The last thing a schoolboy blusterer would do is pick a fight with the son of a man who has killed other bullies. Nor does Jack's anger with his father wash. A son might be shaken to discover his father's heretofore unacknowledged commando-like competence with firearms, but he surely would not mock him for it.

Then there is Cronenberg's action-scene choreography. Whether Tom goes up against two, three, or six baddies, he takes them out one at a time with an acrobatic élan worthy of Jackie Chan, while the other thugs obligingly remain out of camera range. Then, Cronenberg mocks these heroics by inserting extreme close-ups of their violent consequences depicted with all the repulsively clinical exactness made possible by state-of-the-art special effects: a jaw shot away; a nose blown off; a blasted skull seeping blood viscously on a carpet; a dying man, his impossibly twisted body twitching spasmodically. These gruesome shots scream, "Look at this; this is the consequence of real violence. Do you find it entertaining?" Other reviewers have been awed by these feints from fake cinematic mayhem to medically graphic results, but I found them dramatically dissonant and thematically pretentious. Cronenberg means to ridicule popular cinematic conventions to our edification. Stylized brutality is an impermissible guilty pleasure to be exorcised by mockery. But these action scenes come across as snidely superior. This is the type of "fun" that divides the audience into two camps: the in-the-know sophisticates and the uninitiated clueless. The first smirk with self-congratulatory satisfaction; the second are left to scratch their heads.

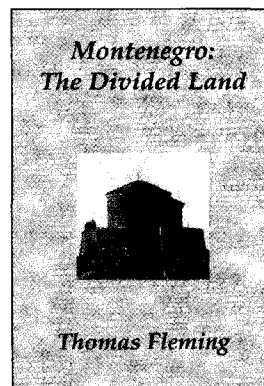
I suppose Cronenberg meant to take Alfred Hitchcock's lead. Hitchcock famously liked to entertain his audience

es with violent or macabre sequences carried off with cinematic panache and then remind them that their enjoyment was predicated on the spectacle of human suffering. In *Saboteur* (1941), for instance, Robert Cummings chases a Nazi spy through Radio City Music Hall while a comical murder mystery is playing on the screen. As an actor in the film within the film draw his gun and fires, the spy starts shooting at Cummings and one of the "real" bullets hits a man in the audience. Then Hitchcock comes in for a close up of the wounded, dying man slumping in his seat as the unsuspecting audience members around him laugh uproariously at the comic violence on screen. The scene brilliantly implicates the real audience, the one watching *Saboteur*, in the violence they are witnessing. We are reminded that, like the movie audience within the film, we are taking voyeuristic pleasure in watching others suffer pain and death while comfortably ensconced in our theater seats—or, today, on our sofas watching Turner Classic Movies. There is a huge difference between Hitchcock and Cronenberg, however, and it is illuminating. While Hitchcock ably conveys his point without using blood and gore and with no lag in his film's entertainment, Cronenberg's grisly close-ups take us outside his film and into his lecture hall, where he gives us a lesson soured with a dollop of irony and a ton of political correctness. Men are inherently vicious. Tom is a man. Therefore, Tom is a monster. Cronen-

berg dramatizes this with bookend sex scenes. The first takes place before any of the gunplay. With the children out of the house, Tom and Edie repair to the attic, where Edie pretends to be a high-school cheerleader having one off with her boyfriend while her parents sleep below them. Tom obliges her scenario with some, shall we say, oral preliminaries, visually suggested, thankfully, but unmistakable. This identifies him as enlightened and considerate. The second sex scene arrives after Tom's conflict with Fogarty has turned violent. His family has begun to fragment under the pressure of fear complicated by suspicion. Edie comes to doubt Tom's innocence in the Fogarty matter and strikes out at him, supposing he has misled her. He instinctively subdues her sexually without any preliminaries, taking her with phallic abruptness, and on the staircase, no less. Afterward, we catch a glimpse of Edie's back, rubbed raw by the treads. The first encounter exhibits courtly consideration; the second is inflected with a savagery begotten of Tom's recourse to aggression in his conflict with the criminals.

It seems the male of the species is a hopeless case—unless, of course, he is willing to submit to Cronenberg's lesson and become a right-thinking liberal pacifist, embracing a pusillanimous inoffensiveness as though it were a creed.

As the credits reveal, Cronenberg's film is an adaptation of a graphic novel of the same title. No wonder it's so cartoonish. c



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This Time, Be Prepared

The Serb land of Montenegro is once again at the crossroads of history. The blood-soaked mountains and dramatic coastline of this small land have been fought over by Illyrians, Macedonians, Romans, Byzantines, Turks, and Venetians, and, in the 20th century, by the armies of Austria-Hungary, Italy, and Germany. In World War II, Montenegro lost more men, per capita, than any nation of Europe, and now it is the latest target of the so-called international community, which has tried to create a phony separatist movement (complete with a bogus national church) to continue the disastrous policies that have involved the United States in wars over Bosnia and Kosovo.

Thomas Fleming has written the first well-researched history of Montenegro in the English language, taking the story from ancient times all the way up to the current crisis over separation from Serbia. This is no dry academic tome but a lively account of a brave people whose brave history rivals the tales of Leonidas and his Spartans at Thermopylae.

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by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

A Border Surprise

In the Year of Our Lord 1878, on the sixth day of the sixth month of the year, was born to one Augustín Arango and his wife, Micaela Arambula, humble peasants on the Rancho de la Loyotada in Durango State, Republic of Mexico, a son, Doroteo, known to posterity as Francisco “Pancho” Villa: social bandit, indefatigable warrior, military genius, and savior of his country. In his honor, the *Hijos de Pancho Villa* assemble yearly on the anniversary of the hero’s birth in the town of Namiquipa, Chihuahua State, to celebrate the legacy passed down by its owner to his proud descendants, real as well as imagined. Héctor Villa would sooner have absented himself from an election in which George W. Bush was on the ballot than miss the occasion, himself.

Only this year, there were problems to overcome. Several, such as the high cost of gasoline, were relatively small and of little account. Others, such as the opening of the annual convention of the Border Lands Association of Artificial Intelligence Service Professionals in Tucson, on the morning of June 9, were more troublesome. (Though, owing possibly to its unpronounceable and highly forgettable acronym, BLAAISP was usually so ill attended as to be hardly worth bothering with, Héctor was a firm believer that failure to present oneself at associational meetings amounted to an un-American, as well as unprofessional, lapse.) Far more serious were the prevalent lack of air conditioning in Namiquipa—and another possible source of discomfort, also related to heat, as well. This was his in-laws, the Eufemio Villas, still resident—as well as, presumably, smoldering—in Namiquipa. Eufemio, though formerly a Son of Pancho Villa, had been expelled from the society several years before after failing to pay his dues for three years straight. There would be no danger, therefore, of encountering him at the annual meeting. For the rest of it, Namiquipa was a very small place, where everybody not only knew everybody but encountered him in the streets and shops every day of the week. Eufemio, like most bullies and con men, was essentially a coward, but Juana was a cow of another color, dangerous as a charging buffalo when angered. If, having had

the barn door slammed shut in her face by the American officials and gotten arrested by the *federales* as a suspected terrorist into the bargain, she wasn’t simmering with rage still, then (Héctor concluded) Juana must have been touched by an angel in the meanwhile. He had reason to doubt, however, that such a miracle had actually occurred. Therefore, the simple thought of encountering his sister-in-law face-to-face, even in the open air and in public, was sufficient to cause Héctor to consider skipping *Hijos de Pancho Villa* altogether this year and driving directly over to Tucson, instead.

He came close to doing so when he brought up the subject to his wife over the dinner table, a week before the celebrations in Namiquipa. Héctor realized his mistake almost before the words were out of his mouth, but it was already too late for him. AveMaría, always quick to spot an opportunity, pounced. If Héctor would not be leaving for Mexico June 4 after all, he’d be available to accompany the family to the Mexican Heritage Fair in Albuquerque, sponsored annually by the Mexican Heritage Foundation, that weekend. Héctor nodded compliantly in agreement, but inwardly, he shuddered. He despised the foundation and everything associated with it as representing the height of un-Americanism and the spirit of disloyalty. Ostensibly devoted to the cause of ethnic self-respect, its true agenda was only too obviously the *Reconquista* pure and simple. The Mexican Heritage Foundation was the Nation of Aztlán with a face as innocent-looking as that of Attorney General Gonzales. Almost as bad, in addition to being made party to treason, he would have to put up with AveMaría’s friends on the organization committee, women of a certain age and built like container ships, who held bossy jobs in local government and sang in Spanish choirs in their parish churches. Finally, besides lugging George Dubya around in his arms, he’d have to keep a hawk’s eye on Contracepción, forever lusting after the world (as his mother would have put it), lest she slip away unnoticed to a rock concert and discover it there. The more he considered, the more Héctor inclined to the decision



to reverse himself and attend the *Hijos de Pancho Villa* meeting after all.

Having made his mind up at last, Héctor now faced two final and inescapable difficulties that must somehow be got round. The first—how to break the news to AveMaría and Contracepción that the original Namiquipa plan was on and the Albuquerque junket, off—he concluded to set aside until the last moment, when panic provided its own inspiration. The second—the danger he courted from the likelihood of running into one or more of the Eufemio Villas in Namiquipa—Héctor was determined to resolve at once, if only for his peace of mind. As if in divine reward for his courage, the answer came to him in the middle of the night, as he lay sleepless beside AveMaría. At ten the next morning, just as the stores were opening in downtown Belen, Héctor stood on the sidewalk along Sosimo Pidaloa with his nose pressed against the plateglass window of a novelty shop, which he exited only a few minutes later, carrying a plastic shopping bag in one hand and looking pleased with himself. And he was equally lucky in regard to the other thing. On the night of June 3, AveMaría and Contracepción fell ill together with acute diarrhea after having consumed a large lunch of eggplant parmigiana at the Palazzo Farnese Restaurant in Belen. They were sick all the following day as well, so that, when Héctor announced, with elaborate casualness, that he guessed they wouldn’t feel up to driving to Albuquerque after all, nobody contradicted him. He got an early start for Namiquipa next morning and checked into a motel in Candelaria, Chihuahua State, after dark, having been delayed some hours by traffic gridlock at the border-crossing in Juárez.

Héctor awoke at sunrise to a view of the surrounding Chihuahuan desert, bleak

looking even under a late spring sky of milky blue with its naked rock fins oriented north and south and clay-colored expanse of scrabbled caliche dotted with cholla, greasewood, and mesquite, bisected by the black ribbon of the highway bordered with broken bottles and other trash flung from passing cars. Had this tortured, depressing place called Mexico ever really been his home? He ate a hurried breakfast of *huevos rancheros*, *tortillas*, and coffee and was on his way again before seven. Though the meetings, scheduled to begin at nine A.M. sharp, rarely got started before one or two in the afternoon, he had 265 kilometers to drive still to Namiquipa, where he would have to find the motel he'd be staying at and get himself into the disguise he was quite certain not even his sister-in-law would be able to penetrate.

Inspired by the Luz Corral Look-alike Contest, organized in honor of Pancho's favorite "wife" to launch the proceedings, the Sons had gathered punctually for the first time ever in their chapter house on the outskirts of town adjacent to the cockfighting arena. To accommodate the contest, it had been necessary to waive, on a one-time basis, the hard-and-fast rule against the presence of women at meetings, a violation of protocol some of the older members had protested. Already by ten o'clock, the society president and subordinate officers felt themselves vindicated by the spectacular success the contest, fueled by plentiful amounts of beer and tequila, had produced. Never, in the experience of anyone present, had a gathering of the *Hijos de Pancho Villa* been brought off to such fervent, even riotous, effect. It was shortly past ten when the new Luz Corral was crowned. Half an hour later, Sons were pouring into the street, snatching at girls who bore only passing resemblances to Juana Torres, Austreberta Rentería, and Soldedad Seañez and dragging them into the chapter house to participate in additional contests. In the confusion, the arrival, toward noon, of a latecomer to the festivities was not immediately noticed. Wearing a shiny black suit buttoned tightly over his paunch, a white shirt open at the collar, white beard, and wire-rimmed spectacles, the old fellow appeared dazed to discover the party in full swing at so early an hour. But he joined in gamely, working his way around the frenzied dancers through a haze of tobacco smoke to the table where beer chilled in tubs of ice and helping himself to a bottle, a slice of lime,

a sprinkle of salt on the back of his hand, and a shot of tequila as a booster.

He was a wallflower at an orgy and almost certainly would have remained that way had he not been spied by Alfredo Terrazas, the newspaper editor and village intellectual. Terrazas, who, when sober, was at work on a history of the Mexican Civil War, was very drunk this morning. In search of beer and a fresh bottle of tequila, he stumbled unexpectedly upon an elderly, potbellied gentleman dressed in black, bespectacled, and whiskered like a goat. Terrazas, in spite of being a journalist and historian, was also a poet with a poet's imagination, open to the power of suggestion. Steeped as he was in the history of 20th-century Mexico, Terrazas recognized at once the disheveled figure before him.

"¡Venustiano Carranza!" he shouted, falling back a step and stabbing ahead of himself with a nicotine-stained finger. "How dare you come here—how dare you show yourself at such an affair as this! ¡Canalla! ¡Traidor! ¡A las armas! ¡A las armas!"

In terror, Héctor tore away his glasses, ripped off his beard, jerked the pillow from under his shirt, and flung everything down on the floor. But the Sons of Pancho Villa were upon him already, swinging, punching, and kicking, brandishing beer bottles upraised as clubs. Just as he went down beneath the pile-on, he distinguished Eufemio Villa among the crowd, his eyes asquint and reddened like an enraged pig's. Though he was five years in arrears with his dues, the *Hijos de Pancho Villa* had let him into the meeting anyway, as one of the most enthusiastic organizers of the Luz Corral Look-alike Contest.

* * *

It had been a terrible trip and now, twelve hours late already for the BLAAISP convention in Tucson, Héctor arrived at Agua Prieta on the Mexican-U.S. border to discover the northbound traffic backed up for several miles south from the international crossing, on account, one gnarled old man explained, of a big sale at the Wal-Mart Supercenter in Douglas. (Another waiting motorist thought a free health-fair screening at the Tucson Medical Center was the big draw.) Héctor didn't care if these people were going north to participate in a voter-registration drive by the GOP. At the rate at which the lines were moving, it could be six hours before he passed through Customs and Immigration, with another two-and-a-half hours on to Tucson. The old

man, noting his distress, grinned around the toothpick he held between his two or three remaining teeth and gave him a broad wink. A shortcut existed, he confided, into the U.S. only a few miles east of town. The road was stony and rutted, hardly more than a wagon track. Even so, smugglers considered the route too obvious for regular use, and so the *migra* left it largely unpatrolled. If the *señor* wished, he could give him accurate directions . . .

Héctor was desperate. He was a long-time resident of the U.S. of A., bearing on his person the documentation necessary to prove his identity and driving a vehicle duly licensed in the State of New Mexico. Finally, he was no scofflaw, but an honest person whose only interest lay in returning home in a timely manner to be present at an important professional gathering. Héctor drew a spiral notebook from his coat pocket and, nodding encouragement from time to time to show he understood, jotted down the directions the old man gave him.

The road was considerably farther east and rougher even than he'd been led to believe, winding north through limestone hills covered with piñon and juniper forest. There were no signs, no markers of any sort, so that the first indication Héctor had that he'd crossed onto American soil was three parked minivans beside the trail two hundred yards ahead. A striped awning had been drawn out from the side of one of the vans to make a strip of shade where three men and two women wearing T-shirts emblazoned with Old Glory across the front reclined in lawn chairs arranged to afford a southward view toward Mexico. At Héctor's approach, the men got out of their chairs and stepped to the middle of the road, holding their hands up to him, palms turned out. They were all of them heavy-set, balding or gray-haired, snowbirds apparently from Minnesota or Michigan who had overstayed their time in the Southwest. Two carried shotguns, and the third wore a pistol strapped to his hip.

Héctor recognized these people at once. They were the ones President Bush had described only recently as vigilantes, extremists with dangerous opinions and un-American values. Goaded by fatigue and frustration, he floored the pedal and pointed his car straight at them. Either they jumped in time, or he, Héctor Villa, would run them all down like mad dogs. It was what Dubya would want—and expect—him to do.

The Resurgence of Traditional Catholicism

Since the 1960s, Catholicism in America has experimented with religious liberalism, and the results are in: Two out of three Catholics don't believe in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. The number of priests, brothers, sisters, Catholic schools, seminaries, baptisms, marriages, and conversions has declined — dramatically in certain cases. And weekly church attendance has dropped from 70% to 25%. Catholic liberalism has been a monumental flop. Of course Father Flapdoodle, Sister Snakebite, and Bishop Bubbles are still in denial.

Where's the dynamism in the Church today? Among orthodox, traditional Catholics! The dioceses that have no vocations shortage, the religious orders that are growing, and the seminaries that are packed are predominantly the traditional ones. And traditional Catholics have been founding *new* colleges and seminaries. The only novel idea in Catholic education is homeschooling, spearheaded by traditional Catholics. The only massive grassroots movement in the Church is the prolife movement, led by traditional Catholics. The only significant Catholic presence on TV and radio is that of traditional Catholics. Eucharistic Adoration is back. And for those who want it, the Tridentine

Latin Mass is back — at least for those not subject to obstructionist bishops.

In Catholic journalism, guess what's coming at you *hot off the presses*? Orthodoxy! And who blazed that trail? We at the New Oxford Review did. As Fr. Joseph Fessio said recently, "Since the

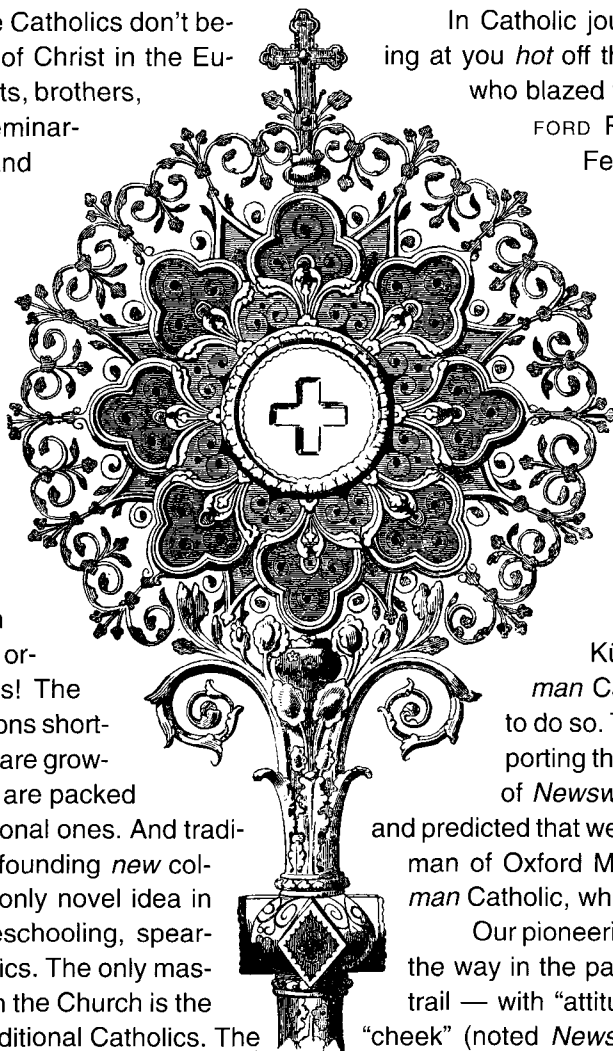
NEW OXFORD REVIEW began...I can count 19 new [orthodox] Catholic magazines."

We were founded in 1977 as an Anglo-Catholic magazine, taking our name from the 19th-century Oxford Movement, and we immediately championed Pope John Paul II when he cracked down on dissenting theologian Hans Küng, although no leading *Roman* Catholic magazine was willing to do so. The novelty of Anglicans supporting the Pope attracted the attention of *Newsweek*, which did a story on us and predicted that we would, like John Henry Newman of Oxford Movement fame, become *Roman Catholic*, which we did in 1983.

Our pioneering monthly magazine has led the way in the past, and we're still blazing the trail — with "attitude" (says Karl Keating) and "cheek" (noted *Newsweek*). And we're unusually cheap (see below).

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THE WAR ON TERROR

Are We Winning or Losing?

Four hard-hitting and candid panels that reveal where America truly stands in her "War on Terror."

THE FAILURE OF THE WEST

The Return of the Ottomans

While Europe and the United States clamor for the allegedly modern, secular state of Turkey to join the European Union, the last six human-rights advisors to the Turkish government have resigned in protest of their government's anti-Christian policies. Learn about the real Turkey and the chilling historical context from Dr. Thomas Fleming, editor of *Chronicles*.

Selling Muhammad the Rope

Col. Ronald Hatchett, former Reagan Administration arms negotiator, questions American antiterrorist rhetoric in light of a history of one foreign-policy blunder after another in the Middle East, arming and subsidizing people who hate America.



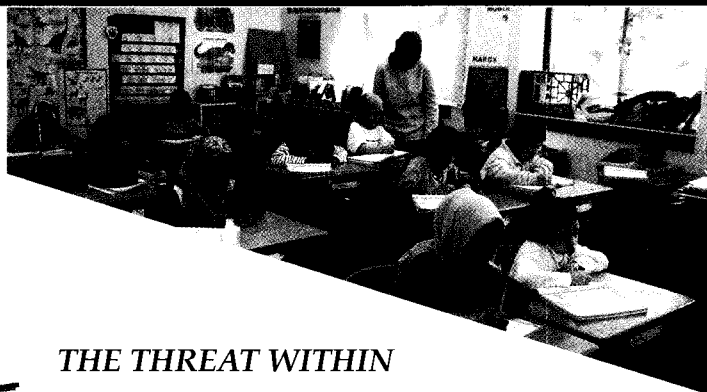
CLOSING THE DOOR

Immigration and Terrorism

Wayne Allensworth, intelligence analyst and native Texan, paints a grim picture of America's southern border and the current administration's failure to acknowledge, much less address, a problem that is no longer simply a matter of culture or economics but of national security.

Learning From Canada's Mistakes

Ambassador James Bissett, former director of the Canadian Immigration Service, describes the effects that Canada's appallingly lax citizenship laws have on the security of all of North America, forcing him to conclude that Canadian efforts in the War on Terror are little more than "feeble."



THE THREAT WITHIN

Legislative Reform Versus Jihad

Dr. Stephen Presser, *Chronicles*' legal-affairs editor and Raoul Berger chair of legal history at Northwestern University Law School, asks if the PATRIOT Act accords with the American legal tradition and finds enthusiasm in unexpected quarters for interpretations of the law that would support aggressive, proactive antiterrorist policies.

Islamic Cells in the Heartland

Scott P. Richert, executive editor of *Chronicles*, discusses the alarming growth of Islamic schools in America's heartland, looks at curricula designed to form the next generation of jihadists, and asks, "Can sharia happen here?"

WEAK LINKS IN THE WAR ON TERROR

With Allies Like These . . .

Dr. Srdja Trifkovic, director of The Rockford Institute's Center for International Affairs, considers the War on Terror in light of American foreign policy in the Balkans, where independence for Kosovo and the centralization of Bosnia-Herzegovina threaten to facilitate the spread of *jihad* into the heart of Europe.

Washington's Failed Policy in the War on Terror

Thomas W. Pauken, former chairman of the Republican Party of Texas, looks at the wholesale takeover of American foreign policy by the neoconservatives and proposes a plan for a restoration of authentic conservative politics.



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